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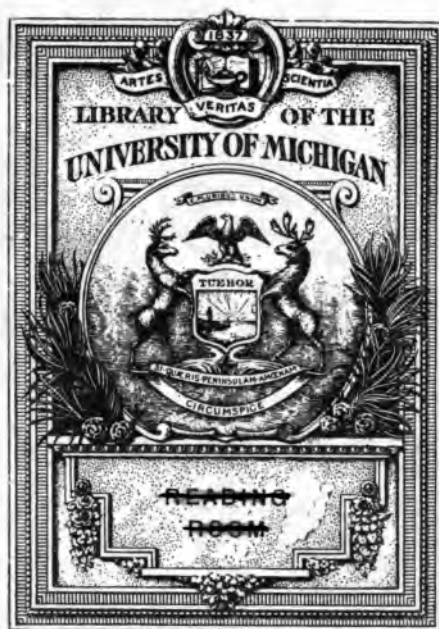
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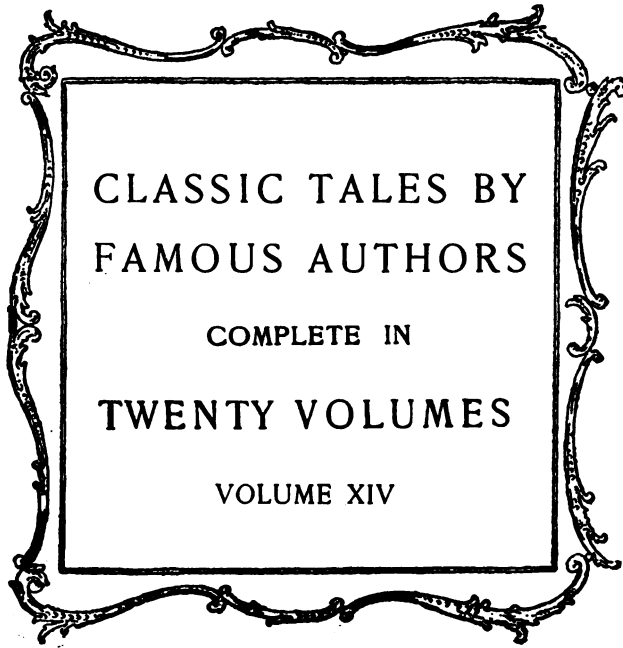
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CLASSIC TALES BY
FAMOUS AUTHORS

COMPLETE IN
TWENTY VOLUMES

VOLUME XIV



Classic Tales

by

Famous Authors

CONTAINING COMPLETE SELECTIONS FROM
THE WORLD'S BEST AUTHORS WITH PREFATORY
BIOGRAPHICAL AND SYNOPTICAL NOTES

Edited and Arranged by
FREDERICK B. DE BERARD

With a General Introduction by
ROSSITER JOHNSON, LL.D.

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**CRITICAL SYNOPSIS
OF SELECTIONS**

THE BELL TOWER

Herman Melville

IN the South of Europe, nigh a once frescoed capital, now with dank mould cankering its bloom, central in a plain, stands what, at distance, seems the black mossed stump of some immeasurable pine, fallen, in forgotten days, with Anak and the Titan.

As all along where the pine-tree falls its dissolution leaves a mossy mound—last-flung shadow of the perished trunk, never lengthening, never lessening, unsubject to the fleet falsities of the sun, shade immutable, and true gauge which cometh by prostration—so westward from what seems the stump, one steadfast spear of lichen'd ruin veins the plain.

From that tree-top, what birded chimes of silver throats had rung. A stone pine; a metallic aviary in its crown: the Bell-Tower, built by the great mechanician, the unblessed foundling, Bannadonna.

Like Babel's, its base was laid in a high hour of renovated earth, following the second deluge, when the waters of the Dark Ages had dried up, and once more the green appeared. No wonder that, after so long and deep submersion, the jubilant expectation of the race should, as with Noah's sons, soar into Shinar aspiration.

In firm resolve, no man in Europe at that period went beyond Bannadonna. Enriched through commerce with the Levant, the state in which he lived voted

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to have the noblest bell-tower in Italy. His repute assigned him to be architect.

Stone by stone, month by month, the tower rose. Higher, higher; snail-like in pace, but torch or rocket in its pride.

After the masons would depart, the builder, standing alone upon its ever-ascending summit, at close of every day, saw that he overtopped still higher walls and trees. He would tarry till a late hour there, wrapped in schemes of other and still loftier piles. Those who of saints' days thronged the spot—hanging to the rude poles of scaffolding, like sailors on yards or bees on boughs, unmindful of lime and dust and falling chips of stone—their homage not the less inspirited him to self-esteem.

At length the holiday of the Tower came. To the sound of viols, the climax stone slowly rose in air, and, amid the firing of ordnance, was laid by Bannadonna's hands upon the final course. Then mounting it, he stood erect, alone, with folded arms, gazing upon the white summits of blue inland Alps, and whiter crests of bluer Alps off-shore—sights invisible from the plain. Invisible, too, from thence was that eye he turned below, when, like the cannon-booms, came up to him the people's combustions of applause.

That which stirred them so was, seeing with what serenity the builder stood three hundred feet in air, upon an unrailed perch. This none but he durst do. But his periodic standing upon the pile, in each stage of its growth—such discipline had its last result.

Little remained now but the bells. These, in all respects, must correspond with their receptacle.

The minor ones were prosperously cast. A highly enriched one followed, of a singular make, intended for suspension in a manner before unknown. The purpose of this bell, its rotary motion, and connection with the

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clock-work, also executed at the time, will, in the sequel, receive mention.

In the one erection, bell-tower and clock-tower were united, though before that period such structures had commonly been built distinct; as the Campanile and Torre del 'Orologio of St. Mark to this day attest.

But it was upon the great state-bell that the founder lavished his more daring skill. In vain did some of the less elated magistrates here caution him, saying that, though truly the tower was Titanic, yet limit should be set to the dependent weight of its swaying masses. But undeterred he prepared his mammoth mould, dented with mythological devices; kindled his fires of balsamic firs; melted his tin and copper, and throwing in much plate contributed by the public spirit of the nobles, let loose the tide.

The unleashed metals bayed like hounds. The workmen shrunk. Through their fright, fatal harm to the bell was dreaded. Fearless as Shadrach, Bannadonna, rushing through the glow, smote the chief culprit with his ponderous ladle. From the smitten part a splinter was dashed into the seething mass, and at once was melted in.

Next day a portion of the work was heedfully uncovered. All seemed right. Upon the third morning, with equal satisfaction, it was bared still lower. At length, like some old Theban king, the whole cooled casting was disinterred. All was fair except in one strange spot. But as he suffered no one to attend him in these inspections, he concealed the blemish by some preparation which none knew better to devise.

The casting of such a mass was deemed no small triumph for the caster; one, too, in which the state might not scorn to share. The homicide was overlooked. By the charitable that deed was but imputed to sudden transports of aesthetic passion, not to any

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flagitious quality—a kick from an Arabian charger; not sign of vice, but blood. His felony remitted by the judge, absolution given him by the priest, what more could even a sickly conscience have desired?

Honoring the tower and its builder with another holiday, the republic witnessed the hoisting of the bells and clockwork amid shows and pomps superior to the former.

Some months of more than usual solitude on Bannadonna's part ensued. It was not unknown that he was engaged upon something for the belfry, intended to complete it, and to surpass all that had gone before. Most people imagined that the design would involve a casting like the bells. But those who thought they had some further insight would shake their heads with hints that not for nothing did the mechanician keep so secret. Meantime, his seclusion failed not to invest his work with more or less of that sort of mystery pertaining to the forbidden.

Ere long he had a heavy object hoisted to the belfry, wrapped in a dark sack or cloak—a procedure sometimes had in the case of an elaborate piece of sculpture or statue, which, being intended to grace the front of a new edifice, the architect does not desire exposed to critical eyes, till set up, finished, in its appointed place. Such was the impression now. But, as the object rose, a statuary present observed, or thought he did, that it was not entirely rigid, but was, in a manner, pliant. At last, when the hidden thing had attained its final height, and, obscurely seen from below, seemed almost of itself to step into the belfry as if with little assistance from the crane, a shrewd old blacksmith present ventured the suspicion that it was but a living man. This surmise was thought a foolish one, while the general interest failed not to augment.

Not without demur from Bannadonna, the chief mag-

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istrate of the town, with an associate—both elderly men—followed what seemed the image up the tower. But, arrived at the belfry, they had little recompense. Plausibly intrenching himself behind the conceded mysteries of his art, the mechanic withheld present explanation. The magistrates glanced toward the cloaked object, which, to their surprise, seemed now to have changed its attitude, or else had before been more perplexingly concealed by the violent muffling action of the wind without. It seemed now seated upon some sort of frame or chair contained within the domino. They observed that nigh the top, in a sort of square, the web of the cloth, either from accident or from design, had its warp partly withdrawn, and the cross-threads plucked out here and there, so as to form a sort of woven grating. Whether it were the low wind or no, stealing through the stone lattice-work, or only their own perturbed imaginations, is uncertain, but they thought they discerned a slight sort of fitful, spring-like motion, in the domino. Nothing, however incidental or insignificant, escaped their uneasy eyes. Among other things, they pried out, in a corner, an earthen cup, partly corroded and partly incrustated, and one whispered to the other that this cup was just such a one as might, in mockery, be offered to the lips of some brazen statue or, perhaps, still worse.

But, being questioned, the mechanic said that the cup was simply used in his founder's business, and described the purpose; in short, a cup to test the condition of metals in fusion. He added that it had got into the belfry by the merest chance.

Again and again they gazed at the domino as at some suspicious incognito at a Venetian mask. All sorts of vague apprehensions stirred them. They even dreaded lest, when they should descend, the mechanic,

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though without a flesh-and-blood companion, for all that, would not be left alone.

Affecting some merriment at their disquietude he begged to relieve them by extending a coarse sheet of workman's canvas between them and the object.

Meantime he sought to interest them in his other work; nor now that the domino was out of sight did they long remain insensible to the artistic wonders lying round them; wonders but hitherto beheld but in their unfinished state, because since hoisting the bells, none but the caster had entered within the belfry. It was one trait of his that, even in details, he would not let another do what he could, without too great loss of time, accomplish for himself. So, for several preceding weeks, whatever hours were unemployed in his secret design, had been devoted to elaborating the figures on the bells.

The clock-bell, in particular, now drew attention. Under a patient chisel, the latent beauty of its enrichments, before obscured by the cloudings incident to casting, that beauty in its shiest grace, was now revealed. Round and round the bell, twelve figures of gay girls, garlanded, hand-in-hand, danced in a choral ring—the embodied hours.

"Bannadonna," said the chief, "this bell excels all else. No added touch could here improve. Hark!" hearing a sound, "was that the wind?"

"The wind, Eccellenza," was the light response. "But the figures, they are not yet without their faults. They need some touches yet. When those are given, and the—block yonder," pointing toward the canvas screen, "when Haman there, as I merrily call him—him? it, I mean—when Haman is fixed on this, his lofty tree, then, gentlemen, shall I be most happy to receive you here again."

The equivocal reference to the object caused some

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return of restlessness. However, on their part, the visitors forbore further allusion to it, unwilling, perhaps, to let the foundling see how easily it lay within his plebian art to stir the placid dignity of nobles.

"Well, Bannadonna," said the chief, "how long ere you are ready to set the clock going, so that the hour shall be sounded? Our interest in you, not less than in the work itself, makes us anxious to be assured of your success. The people, too—why, they are shouting now. Say the exact hour when you will be ready."

"To-morrow, Eccellenza, if you listen for it—or should you not, all the same—strange music will be heard. The stroke of one shall be the first from yonder bell," pointing to the bell adorned with girls and garlands; "that stroke shall fall there, where the hand of Una clasps Dua's. The stroke of one shall sever that love clasp. To-morrow, then, at one o'clock, as struck here, precisely here," advancing and placing his finger upon the clasp, "the poor mechanic will be most happy once more to give you liege audience, in this his littered shop. Farewell, till then, illustrious magnificoes, and hark ye for your vassal's stroke."

His still, Vulcanic face hiding its burning brightness like a forge, he moved with ostentatious deference toward the scuttle, as if so far to escort their exit. But the junior magistrate, a kind-hearted man, troubled at what seemed to him a certain sardonical disdain, lurking beneath the foundling's humble mien, and in Christian sympathy more distressed at it on his account than on his own, dimly surmising what might be the final fate of such a cynic solitaire, nor perhaps uninfluenced by the general strangeness of surrounding things—this good magistrate had glanced sadly, sidewise from the speaker, and thereupon his foreboding eye had started at the expression of the unchanging face of the hour Una.

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"How is this, Bannadonna?" he lowly asked, "Una looks unlike her sisters."

"In Christ's name, Bannadonna," impulsively broke in the chief, his attention for the first time attracted to the figure by his associate's remark, "Una's face looks just like that of Deborah, the prophetess, as painted by the Florentine, Del Fonca."

"Surely, Bannadonna," lowly resumed the milder magistrate, "you meant the twelve should wear the same jocundly abandoned air. But see, the smile of Una seems but a fatal one. 'Tis different."

While his mild associate was speaking, the chief glanced, inquiringly, from him to the caster, as if anxious to mark how the discrepancy would be accounted for. As the chief stood, his advanced foot was on the scuttle's curb. Bannadonna spoke:

"Eccellenza, now that, following your keener eye, I glance upon the face of Una, I do, indeed, perceive some little variance. But look all round the bell, and you will find no two faces entirely correspond. Because there is a law in art— But the cold wind is rising more; these lattices are but a poor defence. Suffer me, magnificoes, to conduct you at least partly on your way. Those in whose well-being there is a public stake should be heedfully attended."

"Touching the look of Una, you were saying, Bannadonna, that there was a certain law in art," observed the chief, as the three now descended the stone shaft, "pray, tell me, then——"

"Pardon—another time, Eccellenza; the tower is damp."

"Nay, I must rest and hear it now. Here—here is a wide landing, and through this leeward slit no wind, but ample light. Tell us of your law, and at large."

"Since, Eccellenza, you insist, know that there is a law in art which bars the possibility of duplicates."

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Some years ago, you may remember, I graved a small seal for your republic, bearing, for its chief device, the head of your own ancestor, its illustrious founder. It becoming necessary, for the customs' use, to have innumerable impressions for bales and boxes, I graved an entire plate, containing one hundred of the seals. Now, though, indeed, my object was to have those hundred heads identical, and though, I dare say, people think them so, yet, upon closely scanning an uncut impression from the plate, no two of those fivescore faces, side by side, will be found alike. Gravity is the air of all; but diversified in all. In some, benevolent; in some, ambiguous; in two or three, to a close scrutiny, all but incipiently malign; the variation of less than a hair's breadth in the linear shadings round the mouth sufficing to all this. Now, Eccellenza, transmute that general gravity into joyousness, and subject it to twelve of those variations I have described, and tell me, will you not have my hours here, and Una one of them? But I like——"

"Hark! is that—a footfall above?"

"Mortar, Eccellenza; sometimes it drops to the bel-fry-floor from the arch where the stonework was left undressed. I must have it seen to. As I was about to say: for one, I like this law forbidding duplicates. It evokes fine personalities. Yes, Eccellenza, that strange and—to you—uncertain smile, and those fore-looking eyes of Una, suit Bannadonna very well."

"Hark!—sure, we left no soul above?"

"No soul, Eccellenza; rest assured, no soul. Again the mortar."

"It fell not while we were there."

"Ah, in your presence, it better knew its place, Eccellenza," blandly bowed Bannadonna.

"But Una," said the milder magistrate, "she seemed

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intently gazing on you; one would have almost sworn that she picked you out from among us three."

"If she did, possibly it might have been her finer apprehension, Eccellenza."

"How, Bannadonna? I do not understand you."

"No consequence, no consequence, Eccellenza: but the shifted wind is blowing through the slit. Suffer me to escort you on; and then, pardon, but the toiler must to his tools."

"It may be foolish, Signor," said the milder magistrate, as, from the third landing, the two now went down unescorted, "but, somehow, our great mechanician moves me strangely. Why, just now, when he so superciliously replied, his walk seemed Sisera's, God's vain foe, in Del Fonca's painting. And that young, sculptured Deborah, too. Ay, and that——"

"Tush tush, Signor!" returned the chief. "A passing whim. Deborah?—where's Jael, pray?"

"Ah," said the other, as they now stepped upon the sod—"ah, Signor, I see you leave your fears behind you with the chill and gloom; but mine, even in this sunny air, remain. Hark!"

It was a sound from just within the tower door, whence they had emerged. Turning, they saw it closed.

"He has slipped down and barred us out," smiled the chief; "but it is his custom."

Proclamation was now made that the next day, at one hour after meridian, the clock would strike, and—thanks to the mechanician's powerful art—with unusual accompaniments. But what those should be, none as yet could say. The announcement was received with cheers.

By the looser sort, who encamped about the tower all night, lights were seen gleaming through the topmost blind-work, only disappearing with the morning sun. Strange sounds, too, were heard, or were thought to

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be, by those whom anxious watching might not have left mentally undisturbed—sounds, not only of some ringing implement, but also—so they said—half-suppressed screams and plainings, such as might have issued from some ghostly engine overplied.

Slowly the day drew on; part of the concourse chasing the weary time with songs and games, till, at last, the great blurred sun rolled, like a football, against the plain.

At noon, the nobility and principal citizens came from the town in cavalcade, a guard of soldiers also, with music, the more to honor the occasion.

Only one hour more. Impatience grew. Watches were held in hands of feverish men, who stood, now scrutinizing their small dial-plates, and then, with neck thrown back, gazing toward the belfry, as if the eye might foretell that which could only be made sensible to the ear; for, as yet, there was no dial to the tower-clock.

The hour-hands of a thousand watches now verged within a hair's breadth of the figure 1. A silence, as of the expectation of some Shiloh, pervaded the swarming plain. Suddenly a dull, mangled sound—naught ringing in it; scarcely audible, indeed, to the outer circles of the people—that dull sound dropped heavily from the belfry. At the same moment each man stared at his neighbor blankly. All watches were upheld. All hour-hands were at—had passed—the figure 1. No bell-stroke from the tower. The multitude became tumultuous.

Waiting a few moments, the chief magistrate, commanding silence, hailed the belfry, to know what thing unforeseen had happened there.

No response.

He hailed again and yet again.

All continued hushed.

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By his order, the soldiers burst in the tower-door; when, stationing guards to defend it from the now surging mob, the chief, accompanied by his former associate, climbed the winding stairs. Half-way up they stopped to listen. No sound. Mounting faster, they reached the belfry, but, at the threshold, started at the spectacle disclosed. A spaniel which, unbeknown to them, had followed them thus far, stood shivering as before some unknown monster in a brake; or, rather, as if it snuffed footsteps leading to some other world.

Bannadonna lay, prostrate and bleeding, at the base of the bell which was adorned with girls and garlands. He lay at the feet of the hour Una; his head coinciding, in a vertical line, with her left hand, clasped by the hour Dua. With downcast face impending over him, like Jael over nailed Sisera in the tent, was the domino, now no more becloaked.

It had limbs, and seemed clad in a scaly mail, lustrous as a dragon-beetle's. It was manacled, and its clubbed arms were uplifted, as if, with its manacles, once more to smite its already smitten victim. One advanced foot of it was inserted beneath the dead body, as if in the act of spurning it.

Uncertainty falls on what now followed.

It were but natural to suppose that the magistrates would, at first, shrink from immediate personal contact with what they saw. At the least, for a time, they would stand in involuntary doubt! it may be, in more or less of horrified alarm. Certain it is, that an arquebuse was called for from below. And some add that its report, followed by a fierce whiz, as of the sudden snapping of a mainspring, with a steely din, as if a stack of sword blades should be dashed upon a pavement—these blended sounds came ringing to the plain, attracting every eye far upward to the belfry, whence,

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through the lattice-work, thin wreaths of smoke were curling.

Some averred that it was the spaniel, gone mad by fear, which was shot. This, others denied. True, it was, the spaniel never more was seen; and, probably, for some unknown reason, it shared the burial now to be related of the domino. For, whatever the preceding circumstances may have been, the first instinctive panic over, or else all ground of reasonable fear removed, the two magistrates, by themselves, quickly rehooded the figure in the dropped cloak wherein it had been hoisted. The same night it was secretly lowered to the ground, smuggled to the beach, pulled far out to sea, and sunk. Nor to any after urgency, even in free convivial hours, would the twain ever disclose the full secrets of the belfry.

From the mystery unavoidably investing it, the popular solution of the foundling's fate involved more or less of supernatural agency. But some few less unscientific minds pretended to find little difficulty in otherwise accounting for it. In the chain of circumstantial inferences drawn, there may or may not have been some absent or defective links. But, as the explanation in question is the only one which tradition has explicitly preserved, in dearth of better, it will here be given. But, in the first place, it is requisite to present the supposition entertained as to the entire motive and mode, with their origin, of the secret design of Bannadonna; the minds above mentioned assuming to penetrate as well into his soul as into the event. The disclosure will indirectly involve reference to peculiar matters, none of the clearest, beyond the immediate subject.

At that period, no large bell was made to sound otherwise than at present—by agitation of a tongue within, by means of ropes, or percussion from without,

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either from cumbrous machinery, or stalwart watchmen, armed with heavy hammers, stationed in the belfry, or in sentry-boxes on the open roof, according as the bell was sheltered or exposed.

It was from observing these exposed bells, with their watchmen, that the foundling, as was opined, derived the first suggestion of his scheme. Perched on a great mast or spire, the human figure viewed from below undergoes such a reduction in its apparent size as to obliterate its intelligent features. It evinces no personality. Instead of bespeaking volition, its gestures rather resemble the automatic ones of the arms of a telegraph.

Musing, therefore, upon the purely Punchinello aspect of the human figure thus beheld, it had indirectly occurred to Bannadonna to devise some metallic agent, which should strike the hour with its mechanic hand, with even greater precision than the vital one. And, moreover, as the vital watchman on the roof, sallying from his retreat at the given periods, walked to the bell with uplifted mace to smite it, Bannadonna had resolved that his invention should likewise possess the power of locomotion, and, along with that, the appearance, at least, of intelligence and will.

If the conjectures of those who claimed acquaintance with the intent of Bannadonna be thus far correct, no unenterprising spirit could have been his. But they stopped not here; intimating that though, indeed, his design had, in the first place, been prompted by the sight of the watchman, and confined to the devising of a subtle substitute for him, yet, as is not seldom the case with projectors, by insensible gradations, proceeding from comparatively pygmy aims to Titanic ones, the original scheme had, in its anticipated eventualities, at last attained to an unheard-of degree of daring. He still bent his efforts upon the locomotive figure

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for the belfry, but only as a partial type of an ulterior creature, a sort of elephantine Helot, adapted to further, in a degree scarcely to be imagined, the universal conveniences and glories of humanity; supplying nothing less than a supplement to the Six Days' Work; stocking the earth with a new serf, more useful than the ox, swifter than the dolphin, stronger than the lion, more cunning than the ape, for industry an ant, more fiery than serpents, and yet, in patience, another ass. All excellences of all God-made creatures, which served man, were here to receive advancement, and then to be combined in one. Talus was to have been the all-accomplished Helot's name. Talus, iron slave to Bannadonna, and, through him, to man.

Here it might well be thought that, were these last conjectures as to the foundling's secrets not erroneous, then must he have been hopelessly infected with the craziest chimeras of his age, far outgoing Albert Magus and Cornelius Agrippa. But the contrary was averred. However marvellous his design, however apparently transcending not alone the bounds of human invention, but those of divine creation, yet the proposed means to be employed were alleged to have been confined within the sober forms of sober reason. It was affirmed that, to a degree of more than sceptic scorn, Bannadonna had been without sympathy for any of the vainglorious irrationalities of his time. For example, he had not concluded, with the visionaries among the metaphysicians, that between the finer mechanic forces and the ruder animal vitality some germ of correspondence might prove discoverable. As little did his scheme partake of the enthusiasm of some natural philosophers, who hoped, by physiological and chemical inductions, to arrive at a knowledge of the source of life, and so qualify themselves to manufacture and improve upon it. Much less had he aught in common with the tribe of

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alchemists, who sought, by a species of incantations, to evoke some surprising vitality from the laboratory. Neither had he imagined, with certain sanguine theosophists, that, by faithful adoration of the Highest, unheard-of powers would be vouchsafed to man. A practical materialist, what Bannadonna had aimed at was to have been reached, not by logic, not by crucible, not by conjuration, not by altars; but by plain vise-bench and hammer. In short, to solve Nature, to steal into her, to intrigue beyond her, to procure some one else to bind her to his hand—these, one and all, had not been his objects; but, asking no favors from any element or any being, of himself to rival her, outstrip her, and rule her. He stooped to conquer. With him, common-sense was theurgy; machinery, miracle; Prometheus, the heroic name for machinist; man, the true God.

Nevertheless, in his initial step, so far as the experimental automaton for the belfry was concerned, he allowed fancy some little play; or, perhaps, what seemed his fancifulness was but his utilitarian ambition collaterally extended. In figure, the creature for the belfry should not be likened after the human pattern, nor any animal one, nor after the ideals, however wild, of ancient fable, but equally in aspect as in organism be an original production; the more terrible to behold, the better.

Such, then, were the suppositions as to the present scheme and the reserved intent. How, at the very threshold, so unlooked-for a catastrophe overturned all, or rather, what was the conjecture here, is now to be set forth.

It was thought that on the day preceding the fatality, his visitors having left him, Bannadonna had unpacked the belfry image, adjusted it, and placed it in the retreat provided—a sort of sentry-box in one corner of

THE BELL TOWER.

the belfry; in short, throughout the night, and for some part of the ensuing morning, he had been engaged in arranging everything connected with the domino: the issuing from the sentry-box each sixty minutes; sliding along a grooved way, like a railway; advancing to the clock-bell, with uplifted manacles; striking it at one of the twelve junctions of the four and twenty hands; then wheeling, circling the bell, and retiring to its post, there to bide for another sixty minutes, when the same process was to be repeated; the bell, by a cunning mechanism, meantime turning on its vertical axis, so as to present, to the descending mace, the clasped hands of the next two figures, when it would strike two, three, and so on, to the end. The musical metal in this time-bell was so managed in the fusion, by some art, perishing with its originator, that each of the clasps of the four and twenty hands should give forth its own peculiar resonance when parted.

But on the magic metal, the magic and metallic stranger never struck but that one stroke, drove but that one nail, severed but that one clasp, by which Bannadonna clung to his ambitious life. For, after winding up the creature in the sentry-box, so that, for the present, skipping the intervening hours, it should not emerge till the hour of one, but should then infallibly emerge, and, after deftly oiling the grooves whereon it was to slide, it was surmised that the mechanician must then have hurried to the bell to give his final touches to its sculpture. True artist, he here became absorbed—an absorption still further intensified, it may be, by his striving to abate that strange look of Una; which, though before others he had treated it with such unconcern, might not, in secret, have been without its thorn.

And so, for the interval, he was oblivious of his creature, which, not oblivious of him, and true

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to its creation, and true to its heedful winding up, left its post precisely at the given moment; along its well-oiled route slid noiselessly toward its mark; and, aiming at the hand of Una, to ring one clangorous note, dully smote the intervening brain of Bannadonna, turned backward to it; the manacled arms then instantly upspringing to their hovering poise. The falling body clogged the thing's return, so there it stood, still impending over Bannadonna, as if whispering some post-mortem terror. The chisel lay dropped from the hand, but beside the hand; the oil-flask spilled across the iron track.

In his unhappy end, not unmindful of the rare genius of the mechanician, the republic decreed him a stately funeral. It was resolved that the great bell—the one whose casting had been jeopardized through the timidity of the ill-starred workman—should be rung upon the entrance of the bier into the cathedral. The most robust man of the country round was assigned the office of bell-ringer.

But as the pall-bearers entered the cathedral porch, naught but a broken and disastrous sound, like that of some lone Alpine land-slide, fell from the tower upon their ears. And then, all was hushed.

Glancing backward, they saw the groined belfry crushed sidewise in. It afterward appeared that the powerful peasant who had the bell-rope in charge, wishing at once to test the full glory of the bell, had swayed down upon the rope with one concentrate jerk. The mass of quaking metal, too ponderous for its frame, and strangely feeble somewhere at its top, loosed from its fastening, tore sidewise down, and tumbling in one sheer fall, three hundred feet to the soft sward below, buried itself inverted and half out of sight.

Upon its disinterment, the main fracture was found to have started from a small spot in the ear; which,

THE KING OF THE GOLDEN RIVER

John Ruskin

CHAPTER I

IN a secluded and mountainous part of Styria, there was, in old time, a valley of the most surprising and luxuriant fertility. It was surrounded, on all sides, by steep and rocky mountains, rising into peaks, which were always covered with snow, and from which a number of torrents descended in constant cataracts. One of these fell westward, over the face of a crag so high that, when the sun had set to everything else, and all below was darkness, his beams still shone full upon this waterfall, so that it looked like a shower of gold. It was, therefore, called by the people of the neighborhood the Golden River. It was strange that none of these streams fell into the valley itself. They all descended on the other side of the mountains, and wound away through broad plains and by populous cities. But the clouds were drawn so constantly to the snowy hills, and rested so softly in the circular hollow, that, in time of drought and heat, when all the country round was burnt up, there was still rain in the little valley; and its crops were so heavy, and its hay so high, and its apples so red, and its grapes so blue, and its wine so rich, and its honey so sweet, that it was a marvel to every one who beheld it, and was commonly called the Treasure Valley.

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Portrait of John Ruskin

THE KING OF THE GOLDEN RIVER.

to roast, which was not often; for, to do the brothers justice, they were hardly less sparing upon themselves than upon other people. At other times he used to clean the shoes, the floors, and sometimes the plates, occasionally getting what was left on them, by way of encouragement, and a wholesome quantity of dry blows, by way of education.

Things went on in this manner for a long time. At last came a very wet summer, and everything went wrong in the country round. The hay had hardly been got in, when the haystacks were floated bodily down to the sea by an inundation; the vines were cut to pieces with the hail; the corn was all killed by a black blight; only in the Treasure Valley, as usual, all was safe. As it had rain when there was rain nowhere else, so it had sun when there was sun nowhere else. Everybody came to buy corn at the farm, and went away pouring maledictions on the Black Brothers. They asked what they liked, and got it, except from the poor people, who could only beg, and several of whom were starved at their very door, without the slightest regard or notice.

It was drawing toward winter, and very cold weather, when one day the two elder brothers had gone out, with their usual warning to little Gluck, who was left to mind the roast, that he was to let nobody in, and give nothing out. Gluck sat down quite close to the fire, for it was raining very hard, and the kitchen walls were by no means dry or comfortable looking. He turned and turned, and the roast got nice and brown. "What a pity," thought Gluck, "my brothers never ask anybody to dinner. I'm sure, when they've got such a nice piece of mutton as this, and nobody else has got so much as a piece of dry bread, it would do their hearts good to have somebody to eat it with them."

Just as he spoke, there came a double knock at the

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house-door, yet heavy and dull, as though the knocker had been tied up—more like a puff than a knock.

"It must be the wind," said Gluck; "nobody else would venture to knock double knocks at our door."

No; it wasn't the wind; there it came again very hard, and, what was particularly astounding, the knocker seemed to be in a hurry, and not to be in the least afraid of the consequences. Gluck went to the window, opened it, and put his head out to see who it was.

It was the most extraordinary-looking little gentleman he had ever seen in his life. He had a very large nose, slightly brass-colored; his cheeks were very round and very red, and might have warranted a supposition that he had been blowing a refractory fire for the last eight-and-forty hours; his eyes twinkled merrily through long silky eyelashes, his mustaches curled twice round like a corkscrew on each side of his mouth, and his hair, of a curious mixed pepper-and-salt color, descended far over his shoulders. He was about four feet six in height, and wore a conical pointed cap of nearly the same altitude, decorated with a black feather some three feet long. His doublet was prolonged behind into something resembling a violent exaggeration of what is now termed a "swallow-tail," but was much obscured by the swelling folds of an enormous black, glossy-looking cloak, which must have been very much too long in calm weather, as the wind, whistling round the old house, carried it clear out from the wearer's shoulders to about four times his own length.

Gluck was so perfectly paralyzed by the singular appearance of his visitor, that he remained fixed without uttering a word, until the old gentleman, having performed another and a more energetic concerto on the knocker, turned round to look after his fly-away cloak.

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In so doing he caught sight of Gluck's little yellow head jammed in the window, with its mouth and eyes very wide open indeed.

"Hollo!" said the little gentleman, "that's not the way to answer the door; I'm wet, let me in."

To do the little gentleman justice, he was wet. His feather hung down between his legs like a beaten puppy's tail, dripping like an umbrella; and from the ends of his mustaches the water was running into his waistcoat-pockets, and out again like a mill-stream.

"I beg pardon, sir," said Gluck, "I'm very sorry, but I really can't."

"Can't what?" said the old gentleman.

"I can't let you in, sir—I can't, indeed; my brothers would beat me to death, sir, if I thought of such a thing. What do you want, sir?"

"Want?" said the old gentleman, petulantly, "I want fire and shelter; and there's your great fire there blazing, crackling, and dancing on the walls, with nobody to feel it. Let me in, I say; I only want to warm myself."

Gluck had had his head, by this time, so long out of the window, that he began to feel it was really unpleasantly cold, and when he turned, and saw the beautiful fire rustling and roaring, and throwing long bright tongues up the chimney, as if it were licking its chops at the savory smell of the leg of mutton, his heart melted within him that it should be burning away for nothing. "He does look very wet," said little Gluck; "I'll just let him in for a quarter of an hour." Round he went to the door, and opened it; and as the little gentleman walked in, through the house came a gust of wind that made the old chimneys totter.

"That's a good boy," said the little gentleman. "Never mind your brothers. I'll talk to them."

"Pray, sir, don't do any such thing," said Gluck.

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"I can't let you stay till they come; they'd be the death of me."

"Dear me," said the old gentleman, "I'm very sorry to hear that. How long may I stay?"

"Only till the mutton's done, sir," replied Gluck, "and it's very brown."

Then the old gentleman walked into the kitchen, and sat himself down on the hob, with the top of his cap accommodated up the chimney, for it was a great deal too high for the roof.

"You'll soon dry there, sir," said Gluck, and sat down again to turn the mutton. But the old gentleman did not dry there, but went on drip, drip, dripping among the cinders, and the fire fizzed and sputtered, and began to look very black and uncomfortable; never was such a cloak; every fold in it ran like a gutter.

"I beg pardon, sir," said Gluck at length, after watching the water spreading in long quicksilver-like streams over the floor for a quarter of an hour; "mayn't I take your cloak?"

"No, thank you," said the old gentleman.

"Your cap, sir?"

"I'm all right, thank you," said the old gentleman, rather gruffly.

"But—sir—I'm very sorry," said Gluck, hesitatingly; "but—really, sir—you're putting the fire out."

"It'll take longer to do the mutton then," replied his visitor dryly.

Gluck was very much puzzled by the behavior of his guest; it was such a strange mixture of coolness and humility. He turned away at the string meditatively for another five minutes.

"That mutton looks very nice," said the old gentleman, at length. "Can't you give me a little bit?"

"Impossible, sir," said Gluck.

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"I'm very hungry," continued the old gentleman; "I've had nothing to eat yesterday, nor to-day. They surely couldn't miss a bit from the knuckle!"

He spoke in so very melancholy a tone, that it quite melted Gluck's heart. "They promised me one slice to-day, sir," said he; "I can give you that, but not a bit more."

"That's a good boy," said the old gentleman again.

Then Gluck warmed a plate and sharpened a knife. "I don't care if I do get beaten for it," thought he. Just as he had cut a large slice out of the mutton, there came a tremendous rap at the door. The old gentleman jumped off the hob, as if it had suddenly become inconveniently warm. Gluck fitted the slice into the mutton again, with desperate efforts at exactitude, and ran to open the door.

"What did you keep us waiting in the rain for?" said Schwartz, as he walked in, throwing his umbrella in Gluck's face. "Ay! what for, indeed, you little vagabond?" said Hans, administering an educational box on the ear, as he followed his brother into the kitchen.

"Bless my soul!" said Schwartz, when he opened the door.

"Amen," said the little gentleman, who had taken his cap off, and was standing in the middle of the kitchen, bowing with the utmost possible velocity.

"Who's that?" said Schwartz, catching up a rolling-pin, and turning to Gluck with a fierce frown.

"I don't know, indeed, brother," said Gluck, in great terror.

"How did he get in?" roared Schwartz.

"My dear brother," said Gluck, deprecatingly, "he was so very wet!"

The rolling-pin was descending on Gluck's head; but, at the instant, the old gentleman interposed his conical cap, on which it crashed with a shock that

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shook the water out of it all over the room. What was very odd, the rolling-pin no sooner touched the cap, than it flew out of Schwartz's hand, spinning like a straw in a high wind, and fell into the corner at the further end of the room.

"Who are you, sir?" demanded Schwartz, turning upon him.

"What's your business?" snarled Hans.

"I'm a poor old man, sir," the little gentleman began very modestly, "and I saw your fire through the window, and begged shelter for a quarter of an hour."

"Have the goodness to walk out again, then," said Schwartz. "We've quite enough water in our kitchen, without making it a drying-house."

"It is a cold day to turn an old man out in, sir; look at my gray hairs." They hung down to his shoulders, as I told you before.

"Ay!" said Hans, "there are enough of them to keep you warm. Walk!"

"I'm very, very hungry, sir; couldn't you spare me a bit of bread before I go?"

"Bread, indeed!" said Schwartz; "do you suppose we've nothing to do with our bread but to give it to such red-nosed fellows as you?"

"Why don't you sell your feather?" said Hans, sneeringly. "Out with you."

"A little bit," said the old gentleman.

"Be off!" said Schwartz.

"Pray, gentlemen."

"Off, and be hanged!" cried Hans, seizing him by the collar. But he had no sooner touched the old gentleman's collar, than away he went after the rolling-pin, spinning round and round, till he fell into the corner on the top of it. Then Schwartz was very angry, and ran at the old gentleman to turn him out; but he also had hardly touched him, when away he went after Hans

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and the rolling-pin, and hit his head against the wall as he tumbled into the corner. And so there they lay, all three.

Then the old gentleman spun himself round with velocity in the opposite direction; continued to spin until his long cloak was all wound neatly about him; clapped his cap on his head, very much on one side (for it could not stand upright without going through the ceiling), gave an additional twist to his corkscrew mustaches, and replied with perfect coolness: "Gentlemen, I wish you a very good morning. At twelve o'clock to-night, I'll call again; after such a refusal of hospitality as I have just experienced, you will not be surprised if that visit is the last I ever pay you."

"If ever I catch you here again," muttered Schwartz, coming, half frightened, out of the corner—but, before he could finish his sentence, the old gentleman had shut the house-door behind him with a great bang; and past the window, at the same instant, drove a wreath of ragged cloud, that whirled and rolled away down the valley in all manner of shapes; turning over and over in the air; and melting away at last in a gush of rain.

"A very pretty business, indeed, Mr. Gluck!" said Schwartz. "Dish the mutton, sir. If ever I catch you at such a trick again—Bless me, why the mutton's been cut!"

"You promised me one slice, brother, you know," said Gluck.

"Oh! and you were cutting it hot, I suppose, and going to catch all the gravy. It'll be long before I promise you such a thing again. Leave the room, sir; and have the kindness to wait in the coal-cellar till I call you."

Gluck left the room melancholy enough. The brothers ate as much mutton as they could, locked the

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rest in the cupboard, and proceeded to get very drunk after dinner.

Such a night as it was! Howling wind, and rushing rain, without intermission. The brothers had just sense enough left to put up all the shutters, and double bar the door, before they went to bed. They usually slept in the same room. As the clock struck twelve, they were both awakened by a tremendous crash. Their door burst open with a violence that shook the house from top to bottom.

"What's that?" cried Schwartz, starting up in his bed.

"Only I," said the little gentleman.

The two brothers sat up on their bolster, and stared into the darkness. The room was full of water, and by a misty moonbeam, which found its way through a hole in the shutter, they could see, in the midst of it, an enormous foam globe, spinning round, and bobbing up and down like a cork, on which, as on a most luxurious cushion, reclined the little old gentleman, cap and all. There was plenty of room for it now, for the roof was off.

"Sorry to incommode you," said their visitor, ironically. "I'm afraid your beds are dampish; perhaps you had better go to your brother's room; I've left the ceiling on there."

They required no second admonition, but rushed into Gluck's room, wet through, and in an agony of terror.

"You'll find my card on the kitchen table," the old gentleman called after them. "Remember the last visit."

"Pray Heaven it may be!" said Schwartz, shuddering. And the foam globe disappeared.

Dawn came at last, and the two brothers looked out of Gluck's little window in the morning. The Treasure Valley was one mass of ruin and desolation. The inun-

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dation had swept away trees, crops, and cattle, and left, in their stead, a waste of red sand and gray mud. The two brothers crept, shivering and horror-struck, into the kitchen. The water had gutted the whole first floor: corn, money, almost every movable thing had been swept away, and there was left only a small white card on the kitchen table. On it, in large, breezy, long-legged letters, were engraved the words:

SOUTHWEST WIND, ESQUIRE

CHAPTER II

Southwest Wind, Esquire, was as good as his word. After the momentous visit above related, he entered the Treasure Valley no more; and, what was worse, he had so much influence with his relations, the West Winds in general, and used it so effectually, that they all adopted a similar line of conduct. So no rain fell in the valley from one year's end to another. Though everything remained green and flourishing in the plains below, the inheritance of the Three Brothers was a desert. What had once been the richest soil in the kingdom became a shifting heap of red sand; and the brothers, unable longer to contend with the adverse skies, abandoned their valueless patrimony in despair, to seek some means of gaining a livelihood among the cities and people of the plains. All their money was gone, and they had nothing left but some curious, old-fashioned pieces of gold plate, the last remnants of their ill-gotten wealth.

"Suppose we turn goldsmiths?" said Schwartz to Hans, as they entered the large city. "It is a good knave's trade; we can put a great deal of copper into the gold, without any one's finding it out."

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The thought was agreed to be a very good one; they hired a furnace, and turned goldsmiths. But two slight circumstances affected their trade; the first, that people did not approve of the coppered gold; the second, that the two elder brothers, whenever they had sold anything, used to leave little Gluck to mind the furnace, and go and drink out the money in the ale-house next door. So they melted all their gold, without making money enough to buy more, and were at last reduced to one large drinking-mug, which an uncle of his had given to little Gluck, and which he was very fond of, and would not have parted with for the world; though he never drank anything out of it but milk and water. The mug was a very odd mug to look at. The handle was formed of two wreaths of flowing golden hair, so finely spun that it looked more like silk than like metal, and these wreaths descended into, and mixed with, a beard and whiskers, of the same exquisite workmanship, which surrounded and decorated a very fierce little face, of the reddest gold imaginable, right in the front of the mug, with a pair of eyes in it which seemed to command its whole circumference. It was impossible to drink out of the mug without being subjected to an intense gaze out of the side of these eyes; and Schwartz positively averred that once, after emptying it full of Rhenish seventeen times, he had seen them wink! When it came to the mug's turn to be made into spoons, it half broke poor little Gluck's heart; but the brothers only laughed at him, tossed the mug into the melting-pot, and staggered out to the ale-house; leaving him, as usual, to pour the gold into bars, when it was all ready.

When they were gone, Gluck took a farewell look at his old friend in the melting-pot. The flowing hair was all gone; nothing remained but the red nose, and the sparkling eyes, which looked more malicious than

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ever. "And no wonder," thought Gluck, "after being treated in that way." He sauntered disconsolately to the window, and sat himself down to catch the fresh evening air, and escape the hot breath of the furnace. Now this window commanded a direct view of the range of mountains, which, as I told you before, overhung the Treasure Valley, and more especially of the peak from which fell the Golden River. It was just at the close of the day, and, when Gluck sat down at the window, he saw the rocks of the mountain-tops, all crimson and purple with the sunset; and there were bright tongues of fiery cloud burning and quivering about them; and the river, brighter than all, fell, in a waving column of pure gold, from precipice to precipice, with the double arch of a broad purple rainbow stretched across it, flushing and fading alternately in the wreaths of spray.

"Ah!" said Gluck aloud, after he had looked at it for a little while, "if that river were really all gold, what a nice thing it would be!"

"No, it wouldn't, Gluck," said a clear, metallic voice, close at his ear.

"Bless me, what's that?" exclaimed Gluck, jumping up. There was nobody there. He looked round the room, and under the table, and a great many times behind him, but there was certainly nobody there, and he sat down again at the window. This time he didn't speak, but he couldn't help thinking again that it would be very convenient if the river were really all gold.

"Not at all, my boy," said the same voice, louder than before.

"Bless me!" said Gluck again, "what is that?" He looked again into all the corners and cupboards, and then began turning round and round, as fast as he could, in the middle of the room, thinking there was

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somebody behind him, when the same voice struck again on his ear. It was singing now very merrily "Lala-lira-la;" no words, only a soft running effervescent melody, something like that of a kettle on the boil. Gluck looked out of the window. No, it was certainly in the house. Up stairs, and down stairs. No, it was certainly in that very room, coming in quicker time and clearer notes every moment. "Lala-lira-la." All at once it struck Gluck that it sounded louder near the furnace. He ran to the opening and looked in; yes, he was right, it seemed to be coming, not only out of the furnace, but out of the pot. He uncovered it, and ran back in a great fright, for the pot was certainly singing! He stood in the farthest corner of the room, with his hands up, and his mouth open, for a minute or two, when the singing stopped, and the voice became clear and pronounciative.

"Hollo!" said the voice.

Gluck made no answer.

"Hollo! Gluck, my boy," said the pot again.

Gluck summoned all his energies, walked straight up to the crucible, drew it out of the furnace, and looked in. The gold was all melted, and its surface as smooth and polished as a river; but instead of its reflecting little Gluck's head, as he looked in, he saw meeting his glance, from beneath the gold, the red nose and sharp eyes of his old friend of the mug, a thousand times redder and sharper than ever he had seen them in his life.

"Come, Gluck, my boy," said the voice out of the pot again, "I'm all right; pour me out."

But Gluck was too much astonished to do anything of the kind.

"Pour me out, I say," said the voice, rather gruffly. Still Gluck couldn't move.

"Will you pour me out?" said the voice, passionately. "I'm too hot."

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By a violent effort, Gluck recovered the use of his limbs, took hold of the crucible, and sloped it so as to pour out the gold. But instead of a liquid stream, there came out, first, a pair of pretty little yellow legs, then some coat-tails, then a pair of arms stuck akimbo, and, finally, the well-known head of his friend the mug; all which articles, uniting as they rolled out, stood up energetically on the floor, in the shape of a little golden dwarf, about a foot and a half high.

"That's right!" said the dwarf, stretching out first his legs, and then his arms, and then shaking his head up and down, and as far round as it would go, for five minutes, without stopping; apparently with the view of ascertaining if he were quite correctly put together, while Gluck stood contemplating him in speechless amazement. He was dressed in a slashed doublet of spun gold, so fine in its texture that the prismatic colors gleamed over it, as if on a surface of mother-of-pearl; and over this brilliant doublet his hair and beard fell full half-way to the ground, in waving curls, so exquisitely delicate, that Gluck could hardly tell where they ended; they seemed to melt into air. The features of the face, however, were by no means finished with the same delicacy; they were rather coarse, slightly inclining to coppery in complexion, and indicative, in expression, of a very pertinacious and intractable disposition in their small proprietor. When the dwarf had finished his self-examination, he turned his small, sharp eyes full on Gluck, and stared at him deliberately for a minute or two. "No, it wouldn't, Gluck, my boy," said the little man.

This was certainly rather an abrupt and unconnected mode of commencing conversation. It might indeed be supposed to refer to the course of Gluck's thoughts, which had first produced the dwarf's observations out

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of the pot; but whatever it referred to, Gluck had no inclination to dispute the dictum.

"Wouldn't it, sir?" said Gluck, very mildly and submissively indeed.

"No," said the dwarf, conclusively. "No, it wouldn't." And with that, the dwarf pulled his cap hard over his brows, and took two turns of three feet long, up and down the room, lifting his legs very high, and setting them down very hard. This pause gave time for Gluck to collect his thoughts a little, and, seeing no great reason to view his diminutive visitor with dread, and feeling his curiosity overcome his amazement, he ventured on a question of peculiar delicacy.

"Pray, sir," said Gluck, rather hesitatingly, "were you my mug?"

On which the little man turned sharp round, walked straight up to Gluck, and drew himself up to his full height. "I," said the little man, "am the King of the Golden River." Whereupon he turned about again, and took two more turns, some six feet long, in order to allow time for the consternation which this announcement produced in his auditor to evaporate. After which he again walked up to Gluck and stood still, as if expecting some comment on his communication.

Gluck determined to say something, at all events. "I hope your Majesty is very well," said Gluck.

"Listen!" said the little man, deigning no reply to this polite inquiry. "I am the King of what you mortals call the Golden River. The shape you saw me in was owing to the malice of a stronger king, from whose enchantments you have this instant freed me. What I have seen of you, and your conduct to your wicked brothers, renders me willing to serve you; therefore attend to what I tell you. Whoever shall climb to the top of that mountain from which you see the Golden

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River issue, and shall cast into the stream at its source three drops of holy water, for him, and for him only, the river shall turn to gold. But no one failing in his first, can succeed in a second attempt; and if any one shall cast unholy water into the river, it will overwhelm him, and he will become a black stone." So saying, the King of the Golden River turned away, and deliberately walked into the center of the hottest flame of the furnace. His figure became red, white, transparent, dazzling—a blaze of intense light—rose, trembled, and disappeared. The King of the Golden River had evaporated.

"Oh!" cried poor Gluck, running to look up the chimney after him; "O dear, dear, dear me! My mug! my mug! my mug!"

CHAPTER III

The King of the Golden River had hardly made his extraordinary exit before Hans and Schwartz came roaring into the house, very savagely drunk. The discovery of the total loss of their last piece of plate had the effect of sobering them just enough to enable them to stand over Gluck, beating him very steadily for a quarter of an hour; at the expiration of which period they dropped into a couple of chairs, and requested to know what he had got to say for himself. Gluck told them his story, of which of course they did not believe a word. They beat him again, till their arms were tired, and staggered to bed. In the morning, however, the steadiness with which he adhered to his story obtained him some degree of credence; the immediate consequence of which was, that the two brothers, after wrangling a long time on the knotty question which of them should try his fortune first, drew their swords,

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and began fighting. The noise of the fray alarmed the neighbors, who, finding they could not pacify the combatants, sent for the constable.

Hans, on hearing this, contrived to escape, and hid himself; but Schwartz was taken before the magistrate, fined for breaking the peace, and, having drunk out his last penny the evening before, was thrown into prison till he should pay.

When Hans heard this, he was much delighted, and determined to set out immediately for the Golden River. How to get the holy water, was the question. He went to the priest, but the priest could not give any holy water to so abandoned a character. So Hans went to vespers in the evening for the first time in his life, and, under pretense of crossing himself, stole a cupful, and returned home in triumph.

Next morning he got up before the sun rose, put the holy water into a strong flask, and two bottles of wine and some meat in a basket, slung them over his back, took his alpine staff in his hand, and set off for the mountains.

On his way out of the town he had to pass the prison, and as he looked in at the windows, whom should he see but Schwartz himself peeping out of the bars, and looking very disconsolate.

"Good morning, brother," said Hans; "have you any message for the King of the Golden River?"

Schwartz gnashed his teeth with rage and shook the bars with all his strength; but Hans only laughed at him, and advising him to make himself comfortable till he came back again, shouldered his basket, shook the bottle of holy water in Schwartz's face till it frothed again, and marched off in the highest spirits in the world.

It was, indeed, a morning that might have made any one happy, even with no Golden River to seek for.

THE KING OF THE GOLDEN RIVER.

Level lines of dewy mist lay stretched along the valley, out of which rose the massy mountains—their lower cliffs in pale gray shadow, hardly distinguishable from the floating vapor, but gradually ascending till they caught the sunlight, which ran in sharp touches of ruddy color along the angular crags, and pierced, in long level rays, through their fringes of spear-like pine. Far above, shot up red splintered masses of castellated rock, jagged and shivered into myriads of fantastic forms, with here and there a streak of sunlit snow, traced down their chasms like a line of forked lightning; and, far beyond, and far above all these, fainter than the morning cloud, but purer and changeless, slept, in the blue sky, the utmost peaks of the eternal snow.

The Golden River, which sprang from one of the lower and snowless elevations, was now nearly in shadow; all but the uppermost jets of spray, which rose like slow smoke above the undulating line of the cataract, and floated away in feeble wreaths upon the morning wind.

On this object, and on this alone, Han's eyes and thoughts were fixed; forgetting the distance he had to traverse, he set off at an imprudent rate of walking, which greatly exhausted him before he had scaled the first range of the green and low hills. He was, moreover, surprised, on surmounting them, to find that a large glacier, of whose existence, notwithstanding his previous knowledge of the mountains, he knew nothing, lay between him and the source of the Golden River. He entered on it with the boldness of a practiced mountaineer; yet he thought he had never traversed so strange or so dangerous a glacier in his life. The ice was excessively slippery, and out of all its chasms came wild sounds of gushing water; not monotonous or low, but changeful and loud, rising oc-

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asionally into drifting passages of wild melody, then breaking off into short, melancholy tones, or sudden shrieks, resembling those of human voices in distress or pain. The ice was broken into thousands of confused shapes, but none, Hans thought, like the ordinary forms of splintered ice. There seemed a curious expression about all their outlines—a perpetual resemblance to living features, distorted and scornful. Myriads of deceitful shadows and lurid lights played and floated about and through the pale blue pinnacles, dazzling and confusing the sight of the traveler; while his ears grew dull and his head giddy with the constant gush and roar of the concealed waters. These painful circumstances increased upon him as he advanced; the ice crashed and yawned into fresh chasms at his feet, tottering spires nodded around him, and fell thundering across his path, and though he had repeatedly faced these dangers on the most terrific glaciers, and in the wildest weather, it was with a new and oppressive feeling of panic terror that he leaped the last chasm, and flung himself, exhausted and shuddering, on the firm turf of the mountain.

He had been compelled to abandon his basket of food, which became a perilous incumbrance on the glacier, and had now no means of refreshing himself but by breaking off and eating some of the pieces of ice. This, however, relieved his thirst; an hour's repose recruited his hardy frame, and, with the indomitable spirit of avarice, he resumed his laborious journey.

His way now lay straight up a ridge of bare, red rocks, without a blade of grass to ease the foot or a projecting angle to afford an inch of shade from the south sun. It was past noon, and the rays beat intensely upon the steep path, while the whole atmosphere was motionless, and penetrated with heat. Intense thirst was soon added to the bodily fatigue with

THE KING OF THE GOLDEN RIVER.

which Hans was now afflicted; glance after glance he cast on the flask of water which hung at his belt. "Three drops are enough," at last thought he; "I may, at least, cool my lips with it."

He opened the flask, and was raising it to his lips, when his eye fell on an object lying on the rock beside him; he thought it moved. It was a small dog, apparently in the last agony of death from thirst. Its tongue was out, its jaws dry, its limbs extended lifelessly, and a swarm of black ants were crawling about its lips and throat. Its eye moved to the bottle which Hans held in his hand. He raised it, drank, spurned the animal with his foot, and passed on. And he did not know how it was, but he thought that a strange shadow had suddenly come across the blue sky.

The path became steeper and more rugged every moment; and the high hill air, instead of refreshing him, seemed to throw his blood into a fever. The noise of the hill cataracts sounded like mockery in his ears; they were all distant, and his thirst increased every moment. Another hour passed, and he again looked down to the flask at his side; it was half empty, but there was much more than three drops in it. He stopped to open it, and again, as he did so, something moved in the path above him. It was a fair child, stretched nearly lifeless on the rock, its breast heaving with thirst, its eyes closed, and its lips parched and burning. Hans eyed it deliberately, drank, and passed on. And a dark gray cloud came over the sun, and long snake-like shadows crept up along the mountain sides. Hans struggled on. The sun was sinking, but its descent seemed to bring no coolness. The leaden weight of the dead air pressed upon his brow and heart, but the goal was near. He saw the cataract of the Golden River springing from the hillside, scarcely five

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hundred feet above him. He paused for a moment to breathe, and sprang on to complete his task.

At this instant a faint cry fell on his ear. He turned, and saw a gray-haired old man extended on the rocks. His eyes were sunk, his features deadly pale, and gathered into an expression of despair. "Water!" he stretched his arms to Hans, and cried feebly, "Water! I am dying."

"I have none," replied Hans; "thou hast had thy share of life." He strode over the prostrate body, and darted on. And a flash of blue lightning rose out of the east, shaped like a sword; it shook thrice over the whole heaven, and left it dark with one heavy, impenetrable shade. The sun was setting; it plunged toward the horizon like a red-hot ball.

The roar of the Golden River rose on Han's ear. He stood at the brink of the chasm through which it ran. Its waves were filled with the red glory of the sunset: they shook their crests like tongues of fire, and flashes of bloody light gleamed along their foam. Their sound came mightier and mightier on his senses; his brain grew giddy with the prolonged thunder. Shuddering, he drew the flask from his girdle, and hurled it into the center of the torrent. As he did so, an icy chill shot through his limbs; he staggered, shrieked, and fell. The waters closed over his cry. And the moaning of the river rose wildly into the night, as it gushed over

THE BLACK STONE

CHAPTER IV

Poor little Gluck waited very anxiously alone in the house for Han's return. Finding he did not come back, he was terribly frightened, and went and told Schwartz

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in the prison all that had happened. Then Schwartz was very much pleased, and said that Hans must certainly have been turned into a black stone, and he should have all the gold to himself. But Gluck was very sorry, and cried all night. When he got up in the morning, there was no bread in the house, nor any money; so Gluck went and hired himself to another goldsmith, and he worked so hard, and so neatly, and so long every day, that he soon got money enough together to pay his brother's fine, and he went and gave it all to Schwartz, and Schwartz got out of prison. Then Schwartz was quite pleased, and said he should have some of the gold of the river. But Gluck only begged he would go and see what had become of Hans.

Now when Schwartz had heard that Hans had stolen the holy water, he thought to himself that such a proceeding might not be considered altogether correct by the King of the Golden River, and determined to manage matters better. So he took some more of Gluck's money, and went to a bad priest, who gave him some holy water very readily for it. Then Schwartz was sure it was all quite right. So Schwartz got up early in the morning before the sun rose, and took some bread and wine in a basket, and put his holy water in a flask, and set off for the mountains. Like his brother, he was much surprised at the sight of the glacier, and had great difficulty in crossing it, even after leaving his basket behind him. The day was cloudless, but not bright; a heavy purple haze was hanging over the sky, and the hills looked lowering and gloomy. And as Schwartz climbed the steep rock path, the thirst came upon him, as it had upon his brother, until he lifted his flask to his lips to drink. Then he saw the fair child lying near him on the rocks, and it cried to him, and moaned for water.

"Water, indeed," said Schwartz; "I haven't half

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enough for myself," and passed on. And as he went he thought the sunbeams grew more dim and he saw a low bank of black cloud rising out of the west; and, when he had climbed for another hour, the thirst overcame him again, and he would have drunk. Then he saw the old man lying before him on the path, and heard him cry out for water. "Water, indeed," said Schwartz; "I haven't half enough for myself," and on he went.

Then again the light seemed to fade from before his eyes, and he looked up, and, behold, a mist, of the color of blood, had come over the sun; and the bank of black cloud had risen very high, and its edges were tossing and tumbling like the waves of the angry sea. And they cast long shadows, which flickered over Schwartz's path.

Then Schwartz climbed for another hour, and again his thirst returned; and as he lifted his flask to his lips, he thought he saw his brother Hans lying exhausted on the path before him, and, as he gazed, the figure stretched its arms to him, and cried for water. "Ha, ha," laughed Schwartz, "are you there? Remember the prison bars, my boy. Water, indeed! do you suppose I carried it all the way up here for you?" And he strode over the figure; yet, as he passed, he thought he saw a strange expression of mockery about its lips. And, when he had gone a few yards farther, he looked back; but the figure was not there.

And a sudden horror came over Schwartz, he knew not why; but the thirst for gold prevailed over his fear, and he rushed on. And the bank of black cloud rose to the zenith, and out of it came bursts of spiry lightning, and waves of darkness seemed to heave and float between their flashes, over the whole heavens. And the sky where the sun was setting was all level, and like a lake of blood; and a strong wind came out of that

THE KING OF THE GOLDEN RIVER.

sky, tearing its crimson clouds into fragments, and scattering them far into the darkness. And when Schwartz stood by the brink of the Golden River, its waves were black like thunder-clouds, but their foam was like fire; and the roar of the waters below and the thunder above met, as he cast the flask into the stream. And, as he did so, the lightning glared in his eyes, and the earth gave way beneath him, and the waters closed over his cry. And the moaning of the river rose wildly into the night, as it gushed over the

TWO BLACK STONES.

CHAPTER V

When Gluck found that Schwartz did not come back, he was very sorry, and did not know what to do. He had no money, and was obliged to go and hire himself again to the goldsmith, who worked him very hard, and gave him very little money. So, after a month or two, Gluck grew tired, and made up his mind to go and try his fortune with the Golden River. "The little king looked very kind," thought he. "I don't think he will turn me into a black stone." So he went to the priest, and the priest gave him some holy water as soon as he asked for it. Then Gluck took some bread in his basket, and the bottle of water, and set off very early for the mountains.

If the glacier had occasioned a great deal of fatigue to his brothers, it was twenty times worse for him, who was neither so strong nor so practised on the mountains. He had several very bad falls, lost his basket and bread, and was very much frightened at the strange noises under the ice. He lay a long time to rest on the grass, after he had got over, and began to climb the hill

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just in the hottest part of the day. When he had climbed for an hour, he got dreadfully thirsty, and was going to drink like his brothers, when he saw an old man coming down the path above him, looking very feeble, and leaning on a staff. "My son," said the old man, "I am faint with thirst; give me some of that water." Then Gluck looked at him, and when he saw that he was pale and weary, he gave him the water; "Only pray don't drink it all," said Gluck. But the old man drank a great deal, and gave him back the bottle two-thirds empty. Then he bade him good speed, and Gluck went on again merrily. And the path became easier to his feet, and two or three blades of grass appeared upon it, and some grasshoppers began singing on the bank beside it; and Gluck thought he had never heard such merry singing.

Then he went on for another hour, and the thirst increased on him so that he thought he should be forced to drink. But, as he raised the flask, he saw a little child lying panting by the roadside, and it cried out piteously for water. Then Gluck struggled with himself and determined to bear the thirst a little longer; and he put the bottle to the child's lips, and it drank it all but a few drops. Then it smiled on him, and got up, and ran down the hill; and Gluck looked after it, till it became as small as a little star, and then turned, and began climbing again. And then there were all kinds of sweet flowers growing on the rocks, bright green moss, with pale pink starry flowers, and soft-belled gentians, more blue than the sky at its deepest, and pure white transparent lilies. And crimson and purple butterflies darted hither and thither, and the sky sent down such pure light that Gluck had never felt so happy in his life.

Yet, when he had climbed for another hour, his thirst became intolerable again; and, when he looked at his bottle, he saw that there were only five or six drops left

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in it, and he could not venture to drink. And as he was hanging the flask to his belt again, he saw a little dog lying on the rocks, gasping for breath—just as Hans had seen it on the day of his ascent. And Gluck stopped and looked at it, and then at the Golden River, not five hundred yards above him; and he thought of the dwarf's words, "that no one could succeed, except in his first attempt;" and he tried to pass the dog, but it whined piteously, and Gluck stopped again. "Poor beastie," said Gluck, "it'll be dead when I come down again, if I don't help it." Then he looked closer and closer at it, and its eye turned on him so mournfully that he could not stand it. "Confound the King and his gold too," said Gluck; and he opened the flask, and poured all the water into the dog's mouth.

The dog sprang up and stood on its hind legs. Its tail disappeared, its ears became long, longer, silky, golden; its nose became very red, its eyes became very twinkling; in three seconds the dog was gone, and before Gluck stood his old acquaintance, the King of the Golden River.

"Thank you," said the monarch; "but don't be frightened; it's all right;" for Gluck showed manifest symptoms of consternation at this unlooked-for reply to his last observation. "Why didn't you come before," continued the dwarf, "instead of sending me those rascally brothers of yours, for me to have the trouble of turning into stones? Very hard stones they make, too."

"O, dear me!" said Gluck, "have you really been so cruel?"

"Cruel," said the dwarf; "they poured unholy water into my stream; do you suppose I'm going to allow that?"

"Why," said Gluck, "I am sure, sir—your Majesty, I mean—they got the water out of the church font."

"Very probably," replied the dwarf; "but," and his

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countenance grew stern as he spoke, "the water which has been refused to the cry of the weary and dying is unholy, though it had been blessed by every saint in heaven; and the water which is found in the vessel of mercy is holy, though it had been defiled with corpses."

So saying, the dwarf stooped and plucked a lily that grew at his feet. On its white leaves hung three drops of clear dew. And the dwarf shook them into the flask which Gluck held in his hand. "Cast these into the river," he said, "and descend on the other side of the mountains into the Treasure Valley. And so good speed."

As he spoke, the figure of the dwarf became indistinct. The playing colors of his robe formed themselves into a prismatic mist of dewy light; he stood for an instant veiled with them as with the belt of a broad rainbow. The colors grew faint, the mist rose into the air; the monarch had evaporated.

And Gluck climbed to the brink of the Golden River, and its waves were as clear as crystal and as brilliant as the sun. And when he cast the three drops of dew into the stream, there opened where they fell, a small circular whirlpool, into which the waters descended with a musical noise.

Gluck stood watching it for some time, very much disappointed, because not only the river was not turned into gold, but its waters seemed much diminished in quantity. Yet he obeyed his friend the dwarf, and descended the other side of the mountains, toward the Treasure Valley; and, as he went, he thought he heard the noise of water working its way under the ground. And when he came in sight of the Treasure Valley, behold, a river, like the Golden River, was springing from a new cleft of the rocks above it, and was flowing in innumerable streams among the dry heaps of red sand.

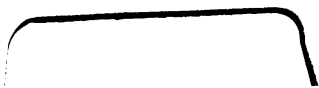
THE KING OF THE GOLDEN RIVER.

And as Gluck gazed, fresh grass sprang beside the new streams, and creeping plants grew, and climbed among the moistening soil. Young flowers opened suddenly along the river sides, as stars leap out when twilight is deepening, and thickets of myrtle, and tendrils of vine, cast lengthening shadows over the valley as they grew. And thus the Treasure Valley became a garden again, and the inheritance, which had been lost by cruelty, was regained by love.

And Gluck went and dwelt in the valley, and the poor were never driven from his door; so that his barns became full of corn, and his house of treasure. And, for him, the river had, according to the dwarf's promise, become a River of Gold.

And to this day the inhabitants of the valley point out the place where the three drops of holy dew were cast into the stream, and trace the course of the Golden River under the ground, until it emerges in the Treasure Valley. And, at the top of the cataract of the Golden River, are still to be seen two black stones, round which the waters howl mournfully every day at sunset; and these stones are still called, by the people of the valley,

THE BLACK BROTHERS



IN THE HOUSE OF SUDDHOO

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cousin had a son who secured, thanks to my recommendation, the post of head-messenger to a big firm in the Station. Suddhoo says that God will make me a Lieutenant-Governor one of these days. I daresay his prophecy will come true. He is very, very old, with white hair and no teeth worth showing, and he has outlived his wits—outlived nearly everything except his fondness for his son at Peshawar. Janoo and Azizun are Kashmiris, Ladies of the City, and theirs was an ancient and more or less honorable profession; but Azizun has since married a medical student from the Northwest and has settled down to a most respectable life somewhere near Bareilly. Bhagwan Dass is an extortionate and an adulterator. He is very rich. The man who is supposed to get his living by seal-cutting pretends to be very poor. This lets you know as much as is necessary of the four principal tenants in the house of Suddhoo. Then there is Me, of course; but I am only the chorus that comes in at the end to explain things. So I do not count.

Suddhoo was not clever. The man who pretended to cut seals was the cleverest of them all—Bhagwan Dass only knew how to lie—except Janoo. She was also beautiful, but that was her own affair.

Suddhoo's son at Peshawar was attacked by pleurisy, and old Suddhoo was troubled. The seal-cutter man heard of Suddhoo's anxiety and made capital out of it. He was abreast of the times. He got a friend in Peshawar to telegraph daily accounts of the son's health. And here the story begins.

Suddhoo's cousin's son told me, one evening, that Suddhoo wanted to see me; that he was too old and feeble to come personally, and that I should be conferring an everlasting honor on the House of Suddhoo if I went to him. I went; but I think, seeing how well-off Suddhoo was then, that he might have sent

IN THE HOUSE OF SUDDHOO.

something better than an ekka, which jolted fearfully, to haul out a future Lieutenant-Governor to the City on a muggy April evening. The ekka did not run quickly. It was full dark when we pulled up opposite the door of Ranjit Singh's Tomb near the main gate of the Fort. Here was Suddhoo and he said that, by reason of my condescension, it was absolutely certain that I should become a Lieutenant-Governor while my hair was yet black. Then we talked about the weather and the state of my health, and the wheat crops, for fifteen minutes, in the Huzuri Bagh, under the stars.

Suddhoo came to the point at last. He said that Janoo had told him that there was an order of the Sirkar against magic, because it was feared that magic might one day kill the Empress of India. I didn't know anything about the state of the law; but I fancied that something interesting was going to happen. I said that so far from magic being discouraged by the Government it was highly commended. The greatest officials of the State practised it themselves. (If the Financial Statement isn't magic I don't know what is.) Then, to encourage him further, I said that, if there was any jadoo afoot, I had not the least objection to giving it my countenance and sanction, and to seeing that it was clean jadoo—white magic as distinguished from the unclean jadoo which kills folk. It took a long time before Suddhoo admitted that this was just what he had asked me to come for. Then he told me, in jerks and quavers, that the man who said he cut seals was a sorcerer of the cleanest kind; that every day he gave Suddhoo news of the sick son in Peshawar more quickly than the lightning could fly, and that this news was always corroborated by the letters. Further, that he had told Suddhoo how a great danger was threatening his son, which could be removed by clean jadoo; and, of course, heavy payment. I began

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to see exactly how the land lay, and told Suddhoo that I also understood a little jadoo in the Western line, and would go to his house to see that everything was done decently and in order. We set off together; and on the way Suddhoo told me that he had paid the seal-cutter between one hundred and two hundred rupees already; and the jadoo of that night would cost two hundred more. Which was cheap, he said, considering the greatness of his son's danger; but I do not think he meant it.

The lights were all cloaked in the front of the house when we arrived. I could hear awful noises from behind the seal-cutter's shop-front, as if some one were groaning his soul out. Suddhoo shook all over, and while we groped our way upstairs told me that the jadoo had begun. Janoo and Azizun met us at the stair-head, and told us that the jadoo-work was coming off in their rooms, because there was more space there. Janoo is a lady of a free-thinking turn of mind. She whispered that the jadoo was an invention to get money out of Suddhoo, and that the seal-cutter would go to a hot place when he died. Suddhoo was nearly crying with fear and old age. He kept walking up and down the room in the half light, repeating his son's name over and over again, and asking Azizun if the seal-cutter ought not to make a reduction in the case of his own landlord. Janoo pulled me over to the shadow in the recess of the carved bow-windows. The boards were up, and the rooms were only lit by one tiny oil-lamp. There was no chance of my being seen if I stayed still.

Presently, the groans below ceased, and we heard steps on the staircase. That was the seal-cutter. He stopped outside the door as the terrier barked and Azizun fumbled at the chain, and he told Suddhoo to blow out the lamp. This left the place in jet darkness,

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except for the red glow from the two huqas that belonged to Janoo and Azizun. The seal-cutter came in, and I heard Suddhoo throw himself down on the floor and groan. Azizun caught her breath, and Janoo backed on to one of the beds with a shudder. There was a clink of something metallic, and then shot up a pale blue-green flame near the ground. The light was just enough to show Azizun, pressed against one corner of the room with the terrier between her knees; Janoo, with her hands clasped, leaning forward as she sat on the bed; Suddhoo, face down, quivering, and the seal-cutter.

I hope I may never see another man like that seal-cutter. He was stripped to the waist, with a wreath of white jasmine as thick as my wrist round his forehead, a salmon-colored loin-cloth round his middle, and a steel bangle on each ankle. This was not awe-inspiring. It was the face of the man that turned me cold. It was blue-gray in the first place. In the second, the eyes were rolled back till you could only see the whites of them; and, in the third, the face was the face of a demon—a ghoul—anything you please except of the sleek, oily old ruffian who sat in the daytime over his turning-lathe downstairs. He was lying on his stomach with his arms turned and crossed behind him, as if he had been thrown down pinioned. His head and neck were the only parts of him off the floor. They were nearly at right angles to the body, like the head of a cobra at spring. It was ghastly. In the center of the room, on the bare earth floor, stood a big, deep, brass basin, with a pale blue-green light floating in the center like a night-light. Round that basin the man on the floor wiggled himself three times. How he did it I do not know. I could see the muscles ripple along his spine and fall smooth again; but I could not see any other motion. The head seemed the only thing

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alive about him, except that slow curl and uncurl of the laboring back-muscles. Janoo from the bed was breathing seventy to the minute; Azizun held her hands before her eyes; and old Suddhoo, fingering at the dirt that had got into his white beard, was crying to himself. The horror of it was that the creeping, crawly thing made no sound—only crawled! And, remember, this lasted for ten minutes, while the terrier whined, and Azizun shuddered, and Janoo gasped, and Suddhoo cried.

I felt the hair lift at the back of my head, and my heart thump like a thermantidote paddle. Luckily, the seal-cutter betrayed himself by his most impressive trick and made me calm again. After he had finished that unspeakable triple crawl, he stretched his head away from the floor as high as he could, and sent out a jet of fire from his nostrils. Now I knew how fire-spouting is done—I can do it myself—so I felt at ease. The business was a fraud. If he had only kept to that crawl without trying to raise the effect, goodness knows what I might not have thought. Both the girls shrieked at the jet of fire and the head dropped chin down on the floor with a thud, the whole body lying then like a corpse with its arms trussed. There was a pause of five full minutes after this, and the blue-green flame died down. Janoo stooped to settle one of her anklets, while Azizun turned her face to the wall and took the terrier in her arms. Suddhoo put out an arm mechanically to Janoo's huqa, and she slid it across the floor with her foot. Directly above the body and on the wall were a couple of flaming portraits, in stamped paper frames, of the Queen and the Prince of Wales. They looked down on the performance, and, to my thinking, seemed to heighten the grotesqueness of it all.

Just when the silence was getting unendurable, the

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body turned over and rolled away from the basin to the side of the room, where it lay stomach up. There was a faint "plop" from the basin—exactly like the noise a fish makes when it takes a fly—and the green light in the center revived.

I looked at the basin and saw, bobbing in the water, the dried, shrivelled black head of a native baby—open eyes, open mouth and shaved scalp. It was worse, being so very sudden, than the crawling exhibition. We had no time to say anything before it began to speak.

Read Poe's account of the voice that came from the mesmerized dying man, and you will realize less than one-half of the horror of that head's voice.

There was an interval of a second or two between each word, and a sort of "ring, ring, ring," in the note of the voice like the timbre of a bell. It pealed slowly, as if talking to itself, for several minutes before I got rid of my cold sweat. Then the blessed solution struck me. I looked at the body lying near the doorway, and saw, just where the hollow of the throat joins on the shoulders, a muscle that had nothing to do with any man's regular breathing, twitching away steadily. The whole thing was a careful reproduction of the Egyptian teraphin that one reads about sometimes; and the voice was as clever and as appalling a piece of ventriloquism as one could wish to hear. All this time the head was "lip-lip-lapping" against the side of the basin, and speaking. It told Suddhoo, on his face again, whining, of his son's illness and of the state of the illness up to the evening of that very night. I always shall respect the seal-cutter for keeping so faithfully to the time of the Peshawar telegrams. It went on to say that skilled doctors were night and day watching over the man's life; and that he would eventually recover

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if the fee to the potent sorcerer, whose servant was the head in the basin, were doubled.

Here the mistake from the artistic point of view came in. To ask for twice your stipulated fee in a voice that Lazarus might have used when he rose from the dead, is absurd. Janoo, who is really a woman of masculine intellect, saw this as quickly as I did. I heard her say "Asli nahin! Fareib!" scornfully under her breath; and just as she said so, the light in the basin died out, the head stopped talking, and we heard the room door creak on its hinges. Then Janoo struck a match, lit the lamp, and we saw that head, basin and seal-cutter were gone. Suddhoo was wringing his hands and explaining to anyone who cared to listen, that, if his chances of eternal salvation depended on it, he could not raise another two hundred rupees. Azizun was nearly in hysterics in the corner, while Janoo sat down composedly on one of the beds to discuss the probabilities of the whole thing being a bunao, or "make-up."

I explained as much as I knew of the seal-cutter's way of jadoo, but her argument was much more simple:—"The magic that is always demanding gifts is no true magic," said she. "My mother told me that the only potent love-spells are those which are told you for love. This seal-cutter man is a liar and a devil. I dare not tell, do anything, or get anything done, because I am in debt to Bhagwan Dass the bunnia for two gold rings and a heavy anklet. I must get my food from his shop. The seal-cutter is the friend of Bhagwan Dass, and he would poison my food. A fool's jadoo has been going on for ten days, and has cost Suddhoo many rupees each night. The seal-cutter used black hens and lemons and matras before. He never showed us anything like this till to-night. Azizun is a fool, and will be a pur dahnashin soon. Suddhoo has lost

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his strength and his wits. See now! I had hoped to get from Suddhoo many rupees while he lived, and many more after his death; and behold, he is spending everything on that offspring of a devil and a she-ass, the seal-cutter!"

Here I said:—"But what induced Suddhoo to drag me into the business. Of course I can speak to the seal-cutter, and he shall refund. The whole thing is child's talk—shame—and senseless."

"Suddhoo is an old child," said Janoo. "He has lived on the roofs these seventy years and is as senseless as a milch-goat. He brought you here to assure himself that he was not breaking any law of the Sirkar, whose salt he ate many years ago. He worships the dust off the feet of the seal-cutter, and that cow-devourer has forbidden him to go and see his son. What does Suddhoo know of your laws or the lightning-post? I have to watch his money going day by day to that lying beast below."

Janoo stamped her foot on the floor and nearly cried with vexation; while Suddhoo was whimpering under a blanket in the corner, and Azizun was trying to guide the pipe-stem to his foolish old mouth.

Now the case stands thus. Unthinkingly, I have laid myself open to the charge of aiding and abetting the seal-cutter in obtaining money under false pretences, which is forbidden by Section 420 of the Indian Penal Code. I am helpless in the matter for these reasons, I cannot inform the Police. What witnesses would support my statements? Janoo refuses flatly, and Azizun is a veiled woman somewhere near Bareilly—lost in this big India of ours. I dare not again take the law into my own hands, and speak to the seal-cutter; for certain am I that, not only would Suddhoo disbelieve

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me, but this step would end in the poisoning of Janoo, who is bound hand and foot by her debt to the bunnia. Suddhoo is an old dotard; and whenever we meet mumbles my idiotic joke that the Sirkar rather patronizes the Black Art than otherwise. His son is well now; but Suddhoo is completely under the influence of the seal-cutter, by whose advice he regulates the affairs of his life. Janoo watches daily the money that she hoped to wheedle out of Suddhoo taken by the seal-cutter, and becomes daily more furious and sullen.

She will never tell, because she dare not; but, unless something happens to prevent her, I am afraid that the seal-cutter will die of cholera—the white arsenic kind—about the middle of May. And thus I shall have to be privy to a murder in the House of Suddhoo.

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Fear little, then, I counsel you,
What any son of man can do;
Because a log of wood will last
While many a life of man goes past,
And all is over in short space.

Now so it chanced that to this place
There came a man of Sicily,
Who, when the image he did see,
Knew full well who, in days of yore,
Had set it there; for much strange lore,
In Egypt and in Babylon,
This man with painful toil had won;
And many secret things could do;
So verily full well he knew
That master of all sorcery
Who wrought the thing in days gone by,
And doubted not that some great spell
It guarded, but could nowise tell
What it might be. So, day by day,
Still would he loiter on the way.
And watch the image carefully,
Well mocked of many a passer-by.

And on a day he stood and gazed
Upon the slender finger, raised
Against a doubtful cloudy sky,
Nigh noontide; and thought, "Certainly
The master who made thee so fair
By wondrous art, had not stopped there,
But made thee speak, had he not thought
That thereby evil might be brought
Upon his spell." But as he spoke,
From out a cloud the noon sun broke,
With watery light and shadows cold:
Then did the Scholar well behold
How, from that finger carved to tell

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Those words, a short black shadow fell
Upon a certain spot of ground,
And thereon, looking all around
And seeing none heeding, went straightway
Whereat the finger's shadow lay,
And with his knife about the place
A little circle did he trace;
Then home he turned with throbbing head,
And forthright got him to his bed,
And slept until the night was late
And few men stirred from gate to gate.

So when at midnight he did wake,
Pickaxe and shovel did he take,
And, going to that now silent square,
He found the mark his knife made there,
And quietly with many a stroke
The pavement of the place he broke:
And so, the stones being set apart,
He 'gan to dig with beating heart,
And from the hole in haste he cast
The marl and gravel; till at last,
Full shoulder high, his arms were jarred,
For suddenly his spade struck hard
With clang against some metal thing;
And soon he found a brazen ring,
All green with rust, twisted, and great
As a man's wrist, set in a plate
Of copper, wrought all curiously
With words unknown, though plain to see,
Spite of the rust, and flowering trees,
And beasts, and wicked images,
Whereat he shuddered; for he knew
What ill things he might come to do,
If he should still take part with these
And that Great Master strive to please.

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But small time had he then to stand
And think, so straight he set his hand
Unto the ring, but where he thought
That by main strength it must be brought
From out its place, lo! easily
It came away, and let him see
A winding staircase wrought of stone,
Where through the new-come wind did moan.

Then thought he, "If I come alive
From out this place, well shall I thrive,
For I may look here certainly
The treasures of a king to see,
A mightier man than men are now.
So in few days what man shall know
The needy Scholar, seeing me
Great in the place where great men be,
The richest man in all the land?
Beside the best I then shall stand,
And some unheard-of palace have;
And if my soul I may not save
In heaven, yet here in all men's eyes
Will I make some sweet paradise,
With marble cloisters, and with trees,
And bubbling wells, and fantasies,
And things all men deem strange and rare,
And crowds of women kind and fair,
That I may see, if so I please,
Laid on the flowers, or 'mid the trees
With half-clad bodies wandering.
There, dwelling happier than the king,
What lovely days may yet be mine!
How shall I live with love, and wine,
And music, till I come to die!
And then— Who knoweth certainly
What haps to us when we are dead?

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Truly, I think by likelihead
Naught haps to us of good or bad;
Therefore on earth will I be glad
A short space, free from hope or fear;
And fearless will I enter here
And meet my fate, whatso it be."

Now on his back a bag had he,
To bear what treasure he might win,
And therewith now did he begin
To go adown the winding stair;
And found the walls all painted fair
With images of many a thing,
Warrior and priest, and queen and king,
But nothing knew what they might be.
Which things full clearly could he see,
For lamps were hung up here and there
Of strange device, but wrought right fair,
And pleasant savor came from them.

At last a curtain, on whose hem
Unknown words in red gold were writ,
He reached, and, softly raising it,
Stepped back, for now did he behold
A goodly hall hung round with gold,
And at the upper end could see,
Sitting, a glorious company;
Therefore he trembled, thinking well
They were no men, but fiends of hell.
But while he waited, trembling sore,
And doubtful of his late-learned lore,
A cold blast of the outer air
Blew out the lamps upon the stair,
And all was dark behind him; then
Did he fear less to face those men
Than, turning round, to leave them there
While he went groping up the stair.

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Yea, since he heard no cry or call,
Or any speech from them at all,
He doubted they were images
Set there some dying king to please
By that Great Master of the art;
Therefore at last with stouter heart
He raised the cloth and entered in,
In hope that happy life to win,
And drawing nigher did behold
That these were bodies dead and cold,
Attired in full royal guise,
And wrought by art in such a wise
That living they all seemed to be,
Whose very eyes he well could see,
That now beheld not foul or fair,
Shining as though alive they were.
And midmost of that company
An ancient king that man could see,
A mighty man, whose beard of gray
A foot over his gold gown lay;
And next beside him sat his queen,
Who in a flowery gown of green
And golden mantle well was clad,
And on her neck a collar had
Too heavy for her dainty breast;
Her loins by such a belt were pressed,
That whoso in his treasury
Held that alone, a king might be.
On either side of these a lord
Stood heedfully before the board,
And in their hands held bread and wine
For service; behind these did shine
The armor of the guards, and then
The well-attired serving-men;
The minstrels clad in raiment meet;
And over against the royal seat

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Was hung a lamp, although no flame
Was burning there, but there was set
Within its open golden fret
A huge carbuncle, red and bright,
Wherefrom there shone forth such a light
That great hall was as clear by it
As thought by wax it had been lit,
As some great church at Easter-tide.

Now set a little way aside,
Six paces from the dais stood
An image made of brass and wood,
In likeness of a full-armed knight,
Who pointed 'gainst the ruddy light
A huge shaft ready in a bow.

Pondering how he could come to know
What all these marvellous matters meant,
About the hall the Scholar went,
Trembling, though nothing moved as yet;
And for a while did he forget
The longings that had brought him there,
In wondering at these marvels fair;
And still for fear he doubted much
One jewel of their robes to touch.

But as about the hall he passed,
He grew more used to them at last,
And thought, "Swiftly the time goes by,
And now no doubt the day draws nigh,
Folk will be stirring; by my head,
A fool I am to fear the dead,
Who have seen living things enow,
Whose very names no man can know,
Whose shapes brave men might well affright
More than the lion in the night

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Wandering for food": therewith he drew
Unto those royal corpses two,
That on dead brows still wore the crown,
And midst the golden cups set down
The rugged wallet from his back,
Patched of strong leather, brown and black.
Then, opening wide its mouth, took up
From off the board a golden cup
The king's dead hand was laid upon,
Whose unmoved eyes upon him shone,
And recked no more of that last shame
Than if he were the beggar lame
Who in old days was wont to wait
For a dog's meal beside the gate.
Of which shame naught our man did reck,
But laid his hand upon the neck
Of the slim queen, and thence undid
The jewelled collar, that straight slid
Down her smooth bosom to the board.
And when these matters he had stored
Safe in his sack, with both their crowns,
The jewelled parts of their rich gowns,
Their shoes and belts, brooches and rings,
And cleared the board of all rich things,
He staggered with them down the hall.
But as he went his eyes did fall
Upon a wonderful green stone,
Upon the hall-floor laid alone;
He said, "Though thou art not so great
To add by much unto the weight
Of this my sack, indeed, yet thou,
Certes, would make me rich enow,
That verily with thee I might
Wage one half of the world to fight
The other half of it and I
The lord of all the world might die;—

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I will not leave thee": therewithal
He knelt down midmost of the hall,
Thinking it would come easily
Into his hand: but when that he
Gat hold of it, full fast it stack,
So fuming, down he laid his sack,
And with both hands pulled lustily,
But as he strained, he cast his eye
Unto the daïs, and saw there
The image who the great bow bare
Moving the bow-string to his ear;
So, shrieking out aloud for fear,
Of that rich stone he loosed his hold
And, catching up his bag of gold,
Gat to his feet: but ere he stood,
The evil thing of brass and wood
Up to his ear the notches drew,
And clanging forth the arrow flew,
And midmost of the carbuncle
Clanging again, the forked barbs fell,
And all was dark as pitch straightway

So there until the judgment day
Shall come and find his bones laid low,
And raise them up for weal or woe,
This man must bide; cast down he lay,
While all his past life day by day
In one short moment he could see
Drawn out before him, while that he
In terror by that fatal stone
Was laid, and scarcely dared to moan.
But in a while his hope returned,
And then, though nothing he discerned,
He gat him up upon his feet,
And all about the walls he beat
To find some token of the door,

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But never could he find it more,
For by some dreadful sorcery
All was sealed close as it might be,
And midst the marvels of that hall
This Scholar found the end of all.

But in the town on that same night,
An hour before the dawn of light,
Such storm upon the place there fell,
That not the oldest man could tell
Of such another: and thereby
The image was burned utterly,
Being stricken from the clouds above;
And folk deemed that same bolt did move
The pavement where that wretched one
Unto his foredoomed fate had gone,
Because the plate was set again
Into its place, and the great rain
Washed the earth down, and sorcery
Had hid the place where it did lie.

So, soon the stones were set all straight,
But yet the folk, afraid of fate,
Where once the man of cornel-wood
Through many a year of bad and good
Had kept his place, set up alone
Great Jove himself, cut in white stone,
But thickly overlaid with gold.
"Which," saith my tale, "you may behold
Unto this day, although indeed
Some lord or other, being in need,
Took every ounce of gold away."

But now, this tale in some past day
Being writ, I warrant all is gone,
Both gold and weather-beaten stone.

ABDALLAH

Edouard René Lefebvre-Laboulaye

CHAPTER I

THE JOY OF THE HOUSE

AT Djiddah, the rich, on the shores of the Red Sea, there oncelived an Egyptian merchant by the name of Hadji Mansour. It was said that he had formerly been a slave of the great Ali Bey, and had served by turns, and sometimes even at the same time, the French and the Turks, the Mamelukes and Mehemit Ali, in the wars of Egypt. During the struggle each party relied on him for provisions, arms and camels, yet after the battle he always complained of having ruined himself for the victor. It is true that at that time no one showed more zeal, and no one obtained more cheaply the spoils of the vanquished. In this honest vocation the obliging Mansour had gained great wealth, though not without some anxieties. He had been denounced by the envious as a spy, he had been bastinadoed by fanatics as a traitor, twice even he would have been hung had it not been for the charity of a pacha, who had consented for the trifling sum of a million piastres to acknowledge such shining innocence. Mansour had too lofty a soul to be dismayed by these political risks; and if he retired, when peace was made, to Djiddah, it

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was only because lawful commerce was thenceforth the only road that led to fortune.

In this new kind of life Mansour was neither less prudent nor less successful. It was a common report that his house was paved with gold and precious stones. Little love was bestowed on the Egyptian, who was a stranger in Arabia, and who passed for one of the harshest of creditors; but at Djiddah men dared not openly show contempt for a man who measured gold by the bushel, and as soon as Mansour appeared in the bazaar, all ran to vie for the honor of holding his stirrup and kissing his hand. The merchant received all this homage with the modesty of a man who knows the prerogatives of wealth; thirty years of avarice and cunning had brought all honest men to his feet.

One thing alone was lacking to this favorite of fortune, and disturbed his happiness; he had no children. When he passed before the shop of a poor tradesman, and saw the father surrounded by young sons, the hope and pride of the house, he sighed with regret and envy, and on his return he shut himself up in his warehouse, forgot his pipe, and, instead of telling his beads or reciting the verses of the Koran, slowly stroked his white beard, reflecting with terror in his heart that old age was approaching, and that he should leave none of his flesh and blood behind him to carry on the business after he was gone. His only heir was the pacha, who might grow tired of waiting, in which case what would hinder him from dispatching a solitary foreigner, and laying violent hands on these dearly-bought treasures?

These thoughts and fears poisoned the life of the Egyptian. What was his joy, therefore, when one of his wives, an Abyssinian woman, announced to him that he would soon be a father! At this news the good man well-nigh lost his reason. Twice as avaricious and cov-

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etous since he had begun to amass treasures for his child, he shut himself up to weigh and count his gold, unfolded his rich stuffs, and dug up his diamonds, pearls and rubies; then talked to these lifeless things as if they could understand him, and told them of the new master who would watch over and love them in turn. When he went into the city he insisted on talking to all he met of his son, for it was a son that God owed his faithful servant, and was greatly astonished to see every one attending to his business as usual, when all the inhabitants of Djiddah should have had but one thought, namely, that God in his justice was about to bless the house of the shrewd and fortunate Mansour.

The Egyptian was not disappointed in his expectations; and, that nothing might be wanting to his happiness, a son was born to him at the most favorable hour of the most auspicious month of the year. When, on the eighth day, he was permitted to see his long-wished-for child, he tremblingly approached the palm tree cradle, lined with cotton, where the heir of the Mansours was sleeping on a silken handkerchief embroidered with gold, and, gently raising the veil that covered it, perceived a robust infant, almost as black as his mother, already gathering the cotton about him with his tiny hands. At this sight Mansour stood dumb with admiration; large tears trickled down his cheeks; then, controlling his feelings with an effort, he took the babe in his arms, and, approaching his lips to its ear, "God is great," he murmured; "there is no god but God, and Mohammed is his prophet." More tranquil after this prayer, he gazed lovingly at his son. "Oh, gift of God," cried he, "thou art but a week old, but, to see thy strength and grace, one would take thee for a year at least. Thy face shines like the full moon! Say," said he, turning to the mother, "what have you named him?"

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"If God had afflicted me with a daughter," answered the Ethiopian, "I should have chosen a name for her; but since I have had the glory of bringing a man-child into the world, to you belongs that honor. Beware, however, of too ambitious a name, which might arouse the jealousy of the evil eye."

Mansour was reflecting, when suddenly he heard a noise in the street. A Persian dervish was driving before him an ass laden with provisions, while a crowd of children was following the heretic, and showering him with abuse and blows. The dervish pressed forward like a man who neither feared nor sought martyrdom, stopping now and then to rail at his enemies. "Accursed be thou, oh Omar!"¹ cried he, striking the ass, "and accursed be all who resemble thee!" "Behold a new proof of my happiness!" cried Mansour. "My child shall be called Omar; such a name will ward off the evil eye, and preserve him from all witchcraft."

As he was replacing the babe in the cradle, a Bedouin woman entered the room with an infant in her arms. She was tall and well formed; her face was unveiled, as is the custom in the desert; and her mien was so graceful and dignified that, poorly clad as she was, she might have been taken for a sultana.

"Welcome, Halima," said Mansour. "I have not forgotten that Yusuf, your husband, fell in my service while defending my last caravan. The moment has come to prove that I am not ungrateful. You know what I expect of you. If I cannot make my son a sherif or give him the green turban, I can at least cause him to be brought up like the son of a sherif, under a tent, among the noble Beni Amurs. Admitted into your family, and nurtured with your son, my beloved Omar will learn a purer speech than mine, and

¹ Homar, or Omar, in Arabic, signifies an ass.

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will find friends among your kindred who will protect him in after years. On my side, I shall fittingly recognize and reward your devotion. Let the friendship of our children begin from this day; from this day let them sleep in the same cradle. To-morrow you shall carry them away, that they may grow up together in your tribe. Omar shall be your son as Abdallah shall be mine; may fortune smile on both!"

"May God be their refuge against Satan, the accursed!" answered Halima, bowing her head. "We are in God's hands; to him we must return."

Mansour looked at her, smiling. He was a free-thinker, and had little faith in God, although his name was constantly on his lips. He had lived too long, and mixed too much with men, to believe that God meddles much with the affairs of this world; on the other hand, he had a strong belief in the devil, of whom he stood in great fear. The only action in his whole life for which he reproached himself was that of having thrown seven stones at the great devil of Jamrat at the time of his pilgrimage to Mecca, and he still feared the rancor of Satan whom he had stoned. Doubtless he was proud of having cheaply earned the noble title of hadji,¹ which rendered him worthy of respect in the eyes of his customers; it was with the purest devotion that he spoke of the Caaba,² that gem of Paradise placed by Father Abraham in the holy city of Mecca, but at heart he was not easy respecting the consequences of his imprudence, and would even have surrendered the name of hadji to have been sure of the devil's forgiveness for his rashness.

¹ Hadji, or saint, is the name given to those who have made the pilgrimage to Mecca.

² The holy house, or principal temple of Mecca.

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CHAPTER II

THE HOROSCOPE

The same evening, just as the moon was rising, the wise Mansour entered the room where the two children were sleeping peacefully in each other's arms, followed by a ragged dervish, with a dirty, uncombed beard, bearing a strong resemblance to the reviled heretic of the morning. He was one of those shameless beggars who seek the fortunes of others in the stars without ever finding their own therein, and who, always pursued and hooted at, and always employed, will last as long as the malice of Satan, or the avarice and credulity of men. Halima was unwilling to leave the children with this suspicious personage, but Mansour commanded it, and she was forced to obey. Scarcely had she quitted the room when the Egyptian led the dervish to the cradle, and ordered him to draw his son's horoscope.

After attentively gazing at the child, the astrologer mounted the house-top and observed the stars; then, taking a coal, he traced a large circle, divided into several compartments, in which he placed the planets, and at length declared that the heavens were not inauspicious. If a Mars and Venus were indifferent, Mercury, on the contrary, appeared under a better aspect. This was all he could tell for the two sequins that Mansour had given him.

The merchant led the diviner back to the chamber, and, showing him two large doubloons, "Is there no means," said he, "of knowing more? Have the stars already revealed all their secrets?"

"Art is infinite," answered the dervish, pouncing on the gold; "I can also tell you under the influence of what sign the child is destined to live."

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Drawing from his girdle a cabalistic tablet and a bronze pen, the astrologer wrote the names of the child and the mother, placing the letters in a line; he then calculated the numerical value of the letters, and, looking at Mansour with sparkling eyes, "Happy father," he said, "your son is born under the sign of the Balance; and if he lives he may expect everything from fortune."

"What, if he lives!" cried Mansour. "What is it that you read on that accursed tablet? Does any danger threaten my son?"

"Yes," replied the dervish, "a danger which I cannot define. His best friend will be his worst enemy."

"Ha! what was I about to do?" said the Egyptian. "Perchance this Bedouin child, whom I have placed in my son's cradle, will one day be his murderer? If I thought so I would strangle him on the spot."

"Beware of it," returned the diviner. "If your son's life is bound up with that of this child, you will only kill them both at one blow. There is no proof that this Bedouin, destined to dwell among his tents, will one day be the best friend of the richest merchant of Djiddah. Besides, what refuge is there against destiny? Can you change what is traced by the pen of the angels? What is written is written."

"Doubtless," said the merchant; "but God—his name be exalted!—has said, in the Book of Books, 'Cast not yourselves down with your own hands into perdition.'"

"The day of death," returned the dervish, gravely. "is one of the five mysteries, the key of which God holds in his own hands. Do you remember the story of the man who was with Solomon one day when Azrael passed by the king in a visible shape? Frightened by the look cast on him by the terrible stranger, he asked who he was; and upon Solomon's acquainting him that it was the angel of death, 'He seems to want me,' said

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he; 'wherefore order the wind to carry me hence to India.' Which being accordingly done, the angel said to Solomon, 'I looked so earnestly at this man out of wonder, because I was commanded to take his soul in India, and found him with thee in Palestine.'

"No man can flee from death. Do as he will,
Falls soon or late the arm ere raised to strike;
The sage is he who looks it in the face,
Nor fears nor braves the doom decreed by fate."

With these words the astrologer bowed to take leave of Mansour, who clutched his robe.

"Have you anything more to ask me?" said the dervish, looking attentively at the Egyptian.

"Yes," replied the merchant; "but I dare not give utterance to my thoughts. You seem to me a friend, and you will pardon a father's weakness, where his son's interest is concerned. A wise man like you, who reads the stars, must have carried your curiosity to great lengths. It is said that there are men who, by dint of science, have discovered the great name of God—that name which has been revealed only to the apostles and the Prophet (his name be blessed!)—that name which suffices to raise the dead and kill the living—that name which causes the world to tremble, and compels the infernal powers and Eblis¹ himself to obey it like a slave. Do you perchance know one of these learned men, and do you think that he would refuse to oblige a man who had not the reputation of being ungrateful?"

"You are prudence itself," returned the astrologer, in a low voice, approaching Mansour; "you may be trusted; yet words are naught but wind, and the fairest promises like dreams that take flight with the morning."

¹ One of the names of Satan among the Arabs.

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For his sole reply Mansour thrust his right arm into the dervish's long sleeve, and placed one finger in his hand.

"A purse!"¹ exclaimed the astrologer, in a disdainful tone; "it is the price of a camel. What madman would evoke Satan at the risk of his own life for such a trifle?"

The Egyptian stretched out a second finger, looking at the dervish, whose face wore an air of indifference; then, after a moment's silence, he heaved a deep sigh and placed a third finger in the dervish's hand.

"Three purses," said the astrologer; "it is the cost of an infidel slave. The soul of a Mussulman cannot be bought at such a price. Let us part, Mansour, and forget the imprudent words you have spoken."

"Do not abandon me!" cried the merchant, grasping the dervish's arm with his whole hand. "Five purses are a large sum, and all that I can give. If necessary, I add to it the offer of my soul; our common peril will answer to you for my discretion."

"Give me the five purses, then," returned the magician, "and my friendship shall do the rest. I own my weakness; I have been unable to see you without being drawn to you; may this yielding not cost me too dear!"

Mansour brought the money. The dervish weighed it several times, and placed it in his girdle with the tranquillity of a resolute heart; then, taking the lamp, he walked three times round the cradle, murmuring strange words, waving the light before the child's face, and prostrating himself again and again at the four corners of the room, followed by Mansour, who trembled with fear and anxiety.

After all these ceremonies, which appeared endless to the merchant, the magician placed the lamp on a bench

¹ A purse is about £5 2s. 4d.

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along the wall, and, taking a little box from his inexhaustible girdle, poured a black powder upon the burning wick. A thick smoke instantly filled the whole room, amid which Mansour fancied he saw the infernal figure and flaming eyes of an Afrite.¹ The dervish seized him by the arm, and both threw themselves on the carpet, their faces buried in their hands.

"Speak," said the dervish, in a breathless voice, "speak, but do not lift your head as you value your life. Make three wishes; Eblis is here, and will grant your prayer."

"I wish that my son may be rich all his life," murmured Mansour.

"So be it!" returned a strange voice, which seemed to come from the other end of the room, though Mansour had seen the apparition before him.

"I wish that my son may always have good health," continued the Egyptian, "for, without health, of what use is fortune?"

"So be it!" returned the voice.

There was a moment's silence. Mansour hesitated as to his third wish. "Shall I wish for wit?" thought he. "No, he is my son, and he will inherit his father's cunning." The dervish's prediction suddenly recurred to his memory. "Threatened by his best friend," thought he, "there is but one means of safety for him, namely, to love no one, and to think of himself alone. Besides, anxiety for others spoils our own life, and those we oblige are always ungrateful. I wish that my son may love no one but himself," said he, at length.

"So be it," returned the voice, with a terrible cry, which frightened the Egyptian so much that he remained motionless till the dervish pulled the skirt of his robe and commanded him to rise. At the same moment a

¹ One of the infernal genii.

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jet of flame shot from the lamp, and the whole room seemed in a blaze. Mansour, terrified at his own rashness, rushed to the door to assure himself that he was still alive and that nothing had changed in the house.

While the dervish was putting on his coat and sandals like a man whom habit hardens against fear, a woman rushed to the cradle of the infants. It was Halima, who had remained near the room during the enchantment, and whose terror had been heightened by Mansour's sudden departure. Her first care was to wet her finger to her lips and pass it over the forehead of the children, repeating a formula to ward off the evil eye. The serenity of the dervish reassured her; she blamed herself for having suspected this pious person of magic, who wore on his face the blissful tranquillity of sanctity, and, respectfully approaching him, she kissed the hem of his robe. "Holy man," said she, "my son is an orphan, and I am a poor woman: I can offer you nothing but gratitude, but—"

"Well, well," exclaimed the astrologer, "I know in advance what you would ask of me—that your son should be rich, is it not? For this, what need have you of my aid? Make him a merchant, and let him steal like old Mansour; make him a bashaw, and let him pillage his brethren; make him a dervish, and let him flatter and lie; all the vices lead to fortune when they are joined with the vilest of all—avarice. This is the secret of life. Adieu."

"This is not what I wish," said the astonished Halima; "you do wrong to deride me in this way. My son will be an honest man, like his father; and what I wish is that he may be happy here on earth."

"Virtuous and happy!" cried the dervish, with a sardonic laugh; "and you address yourself to me! My good woman, what you want is the four-leaved shamrock, which none has seen since Adam. Let your son

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seek it; if he finds it, be sure that he will lack for nothing."

"What is the four-leaved shamrock?" cried the anxious mother; but the magician had disappeared, never more to return. Man or demon, none has since beheld him. Halima, full of emotion, bent over the cradle and gazed at her son, who seemed to smile on her in his sleep. "Rest in peace," said she, "and rely on my love. I know not what this talisman is of which the dervish speaks, but, child of my soul! we will seek it together, and something tells me that you will find it. Satan is cunning and man is weak, but God rules the heart of his faithful, and does what he will."

CHAPTER III.

EDUCATION

In choosing the Bedouin woman to whom to entrust Omar, Mansour had given a new proof of his usual prudence. From the first day Halima showed her nursling all a mother's affection, and tended him more carefully than her own offspring. When she was forced to leave her tent, the cherished child that she carried on her shoulder was always El Tagir, or the little merchant, as Omar was called among the Beni Amurs. Yet what a difference was there between the two brothers! Tall, slender, supple and agile, with his clear eyes and brilliant complexion, Abdallah would have filled any father's heart with pride; while the son of Mansour, with his swarthy skin, thick neck, and round paunch, was only an Egyptian astray in the desert. What mattered it to the Bedouin woman? Had she not nourished them both with the same milk? Who knows even whether, like a true mother, she had not

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a secret weakness for the child which had the most need of her love?

As he grew, Abdallah soon showed all the nobleness of his race. On seeing him with the Egyptian, one would have said that he already felt himself the master of the tent, and was proud of exercising the rites of hospitality. Although but six months older than Omar, he made himself his brother's guardian and protector, and his greatest pleasure was to amuse, serve and defend him. In all the games and feasts he insisted on giving the little merchant the best place; and whenever a quarrel arose, it was always he, and he alone, that fought, adroit, strong, and hardy, like a son of the desert.

Omar willingly remained in the background, as if he already understood the advantage to be derived from an uncalculating friendship. As indolent as a dweller in cities, he seldom quitted the tent. The Bedouin ran between the legs of the mares, wrestled with the colts, and climbed the camels without making them kneel; the Egyptian, his legs crossed on a mat, passed the greater part of the day in sleeping, and felt naught but disdain for the noisy exploits which made the joy of Abdallah. When he mixed with other children, it was only to play merchant with them. The son of Mansour had singular skill in bartering a date for a citron, a citron for an orange, and an orange for a piece of coral or some other toy. At ten years of age, Omar had already found that the best use of a rosary was to aid in counting. He was not, however, ungrateful; he loved his brother after his fashion. He showered innumerable caresses on Abdallah, who seldom returned home without bringing bananas, pomegranates, apricots, or some other fruit which had been given him by the women of the neighborhood, who were charmed with his grace and sprightliness. By dint of tenderness, Omar always

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secured what he wished; but he was not better pleased with the success of his cunning than was his brother, in letting himself be despoiled by the one he loved. Each of us is born with his destiny clinging about his neck like a heavy collar, and hurrying him onward; a fox nurtured by a lioness will always be a fox, and a merchant's son will never make a Bedouin.

At the age of ten, thanks to Halima, Abdallah's education was finished; he knew all that a Beni Amur needed to know. The son of Yusuf could recite the genealogy of his family and tribe; he knew the pedigree, name, surname, coat, and brand of all the horses; he could read in the stars the hour of the night, and the shadows told him the time of the day. No one knew better how to make the camels kneel; no one chanted to them in a more melodious voice those sweet songs which shorten their way and make them quicken their pace, despite fatigue and heat. Already even he handled the gun and brandished the lance and saber as if he had been in half a score of caravans. Halima contemplated his youthful courage with tears of joy, happy to see that the child whom she brought into the world would some day be the honor of his people and the delight of his tribe.

Halima was a true Mussulman; she knew that wisdom, strength, and consolation are in God alone. The children were scarcely seven years old when she had already taught them to recite the five prayers and make the ablutions. In the morning, as soon as a faint light illumined the east; at noon, when the sun turned; in the afternoon, when the shadows began to lengthen; at even, when the sun set in the horizon; and, lastly, at night, when darkness covered the earth, Omar and Abdallah stretched the carpet of prayer upon the ground, and, turning towards Mecca, repeated the holy words which comprise all religion, "There is no god but God,

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and Mohammed is his prophet." The prayer ended, Halima loved to repeat to the children the precepts of Ayesha—precepts which she made the rule of her life. "Sons of my soul!" she would say to them, "listen to what Ayesha, the beloved spouse of the prophet, the peerless virgin, and the mother of the faithful, replied to a Mussulman who asked her counsel. Remember these holy maxims; they are the legacy of the Prophet himself, and the pearl of truth.

"Acknowledge that there is but one God alone; remain steadfast in the faith; instruct yourself; bridle your tongue; repress your wrath; forbear to do evil; associate with the good; screen the faults of your neighbor; relieve the poor by your alms; and expect your reward in eternity."

The two children were thus brought up, surrounded with the same love, and a love so tender and equal that the two brothers never suspected that they were not of the same blood. One day, however, an old man entered the tent, armed with a tablet of wood, painted white, on which elegant characters were traced in black. The sheik enjoyed great renown in the tribe; it was said that he had formerly studied at Cairo in El Azar, that splendid mosque, the fountain of light, which is the joy of the faithful and the despair of infidels. He was so learned that he could read the Koran, and copy with a reed the ninety-nine names of God, and the Fât-háh.¹ To the great astonishment of the Bedouin, the old man, after talking in a low tone to Halima, who put a purse in his hand, turned his sole attention to the son of Mansour, caressed him with paternal tenderness, seated him by his side, put the tablet in his hands, and, after teaching him how to sway the head and body to aid the memory, made him chant the whole alphabet after him.

¹ The first chapter of the Koran, and the usual prayer of the Mussulmans.

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Omar took so lively an interest in his lesson that on the very first day he learned the numerical value of all the letters. The sheik embraced him anew, promising him that, if he went on in this way, he would soon be more learned than his master, and quitted the tent without even looking at Abdallah.

The poor boy's heart swelled at the sight of this lesson of his brother's, by which he would have gladly profited. He was spared a second trial. The next morning he was sent to the fields to tend his mother's sheep. He was not alone; he had been placed in the care of a maternal uncle, a one-eyed and crippled old shepherd, but a man of good counsel. Hafiz, for this was the name of Halima's brother, was a brave soldier and a pious Mussulman, who had seen much and suffered much. The companion of Yusuf, Abdallah's father, and wounded by his side, he was the last prop of an almost extinct family, and, alone and childless as he was, he loved his nephew as his own son.

It was he that had opposed the plan of making Abdallah a scholar. "Would you know more than the Prophet, whom may God protect and bless?" said he to the young Bedouin. "What would you read—the Koran? But is it on vile rags or your own heart that its sacred word should be engraved? Strange books—what is the use? Is not everything contained in the Koran? Is it not for rash spirits who seek the truth elsewhere that it is written, 'The likeness of those who take other patrons besides God is as the likeness of the spider, which maketh herself a house? but the weakest of all houses, surely, is the house of the spider, if they knew this.' Those whose minds are swallowed up in books are like asses laden with foreign wealth, which serves only to weigh them down. Man was not born to amass the thoughts of others, but to act for himself. Go forward, my son, with an upright heart, and in the fear

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of the Lord. At the age of strength God will give thee wisdom and knowledge as to the son of Jacob. It is thus that he rewards the just, for himself has said it."

These words kindled Abdallah's heart. Every day, when the noontide heat confined them within the tent, Hafiz recited to the son of Yusuf a few verses of the holy book, and made him repeat them after him in turn. In this way, by degrees, he taught him the whole Koran, beginning, after the Fât-hâh, with the short chapters On Men, The Daybreak, and The Unity of God, and ending with the long and beautiful teachings contained in the chapters On Women, The Family of Imram, and The Cow. The child was like the sands of the desert, which drink up the rain-drops without losing a single one; he never wearied of chanting this rhythmic prose, as superior to poetry as the word of God is to that of men. Day and night he repeated these precepts, in which eloquence and wisdom are strung together like pearls in a necklace. Whenever a good Mussulman wished to give a feast to his comrades or to pay honors to the tomb of a friend, the lame shepherd and his disciple were called upon to recite the whole Koran or one of its thirty sections. Seated on the ground around the master and pupil, the Beni Amurs greedily drank in the divine words. "God is great!" they exclaimed. "Gabriel himself was not more beautiful than this young man when he deposited the eternal revelation in the heart of the Prophet."

Hafiz not only taught his nephew the text of the Koran, but also repeated to him the words of the Prophet which have been handed down to us by his friends. He taught him the four great duties enjoined by God on all who would be saved—the five daily prayers, the giving of one-fortieth in alms, the fast of Ramadan, and the pilgrimage to Mecca; and held up to his detestation the seven great sins—those sins which beget

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seven hundred others, and which destroy the soul—idolatry, that crime which God, according to his explicit declaration, never pardons; murder; the charge of adultery falsely brought against an honest woman; wrong done to orphans; usury; flight in an expedition against the infidels, and disobedience to parents. "Oh, my son," he exclaimed, at the close of each lesson, "thou who, by the decree of God, hast been placed among the number of those who have received the Scriptures, daily repeat that divine promise which is our whole strength and comfort here below: 'Whoever obeyeth God and the apostle, they shall be with those unto whom God has been gracious, of the prophets, and the sincere, and the martyrs, and the righteous, and these are most excellent company. This is bounty from God, and from God nothing is hidden.'"

In order not to weary Abdallah, Hafiz often interspersed his teachings with the stories of some of those innumerable prophets to whose keeping God confided the truth while awaiting the coming of Mohammed. Sometimes it was Adam, our first father, to whom God in his goodness taught the name of every living thing on earth. By the command of the Lord, these creatures, born of fire, adored man, born of the dust of the earth. A single one refused, the ungrateful Eblis, urged by his pride to destruction. Unhappily, Adam and Eve suffered themselves to be tempted by the enemy, and ate of the forbidden fruit. To punish their disobedience, God drove them from Paradise. Adam was flung upon the island of Serendib, where his footprint may still be seen, and Eve fell at Djiddah, where she was doomed to live two centuries in solitude. God, however, at last took pity on the unhappy couple, and Gabriel again reunited them on Mount Arafat, near that miraculous spot where Abraham and Ishmael were to found the holy Caaba.

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At another time the cripple would tell how God showed Abraham the kingdom of the heavens and the earth, that he might know true science. Reared in the faith of his fathers, the son of Azer worshipped the stars. When the night overshadowed him, he saw a star and cried, "This is my Lord!" but when it set he said, "I like not gods which set." And when he saw the moon rising he cried, "This is my Lord!" but when he saw it set he said, "Verily, if my Lord direct me not, I shall become as one of the people who go astray." And when he saw the sun rising he said, "This is my Lord; this is the greatest!" but when he saw it set he said, "Oh, my people, I am clear of your idolatrous worship." The son of Azer understood that the stars scattered through the heavens revealed a higher hand, as the footprints on the sand tell of the traveler that has gone before.

Like a true Mussulman, Abraham had no sooner found the true faith than he broke all the idols of his people except Baal, on whose neck he hung the axe with which he had demolished them. When the furious Chaldeans asked who had treated their gods in such a manner, "It is Baal," said Abraham; "ask him, and see what he will answer you." "An idol cannot speak," cried the Chaldeans; and they said, "Thou art an unbeliever!" But who can enlighten those who have eyes, yet see not! They are blinded by the very light of truth. Furious at having been discomfited by a child, Nimrod, the King of the Chaldeans, ordered Abraham to be thrown into a fiery furnace. Vain cruelty! The Lord Eternal holds the power of life and death. By the command of God, the fire consumed none but the unbelievers. For Abraham, the funeral pile turned to a verdant meadow, and the flames that surrounded him to a cool and refreshing breeze. It is thus that the Lord lifts up the just and humbles the proud.

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Who could exhaust the sacred stories which have been handed down to us by the Koran and tradition? They are more numerous and more beautiful than the stars in a summer sky. Hafiz told them as he had received them from his fathers, and Abdallah repeated them with like ardor and faith. Sometimes it was of David, the blacksmith king, to whom God taught the art of fabricating coats of mail to protect the faithful; sometimes it was of Solomon, under whose dominion the Lord placed the winds, the birds, and the genii. Or it was of Balkis, the Queen of Sheba, when, seated on her throne of gold and silver, set with precious stones, she received Solomon's letter, brought her by a bird, kissed the seal, at which Satan trembled, and became a Mussulman at the voice of the wisest of kings. Or it was of the sleeping companions in the cavern, who awaited the reign of truth three hundred and nine years, with their faithful dog, El Rakim, crouched at their feet. Or it was of the sacred camel brought forth from the rock at the prayer of Saleh, to confound the unbelief of the Talmudites. When did God tire of working miracles to succor the faithful?

Of all these marvelous stories, to which the Bedouins never tired of listening, the one which Halima oftenest asked of her son was that of Job, that faithful servant who turned to God in the midst of his anguish. In vain his wife, weary of seeing him suffer, consented to worship Eblis to regain their lost happiness. Job refused assistance from this accursed hand. If he raised his body, eaten by worms, on the dunghill, it was to lift to the Lord that touching prayer which won pardon from God for the wretched sufferer: "Verily, evil hath afflicted me, but thou art the most merciful of those who show mercy"—beautiful words, which one of the faithful alone could utter.

Hafiz was one of the faithful, but he was also a

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Bedouin, proud of his race—a soldier who loved the fray of battle. "Think, my son," he would often say to Abdallah, "think of the privileges which the prophet has won for us, and which we must defend to the death. To render our life easy, God has given us gardens, living springs of water, innumerable cattle, the dourah,¹ and the palm tree; to render it glorious, he has given us a noble pedigree, a country that has never been conquered, and a liberty that no master has ever polluted. We are the kings of the desert. Our turbans are our diadems, our tents are our palaces, our sabers are our ramparts, and God's own word is our law. Your father fell like a martyr on the field of battle. Among your ancestors, for one who by chance has breathed his last under a tent, three have fallen in the desert, their lance in their hand. They point you the way; they understood the divine saying, 'Let them therefore fight for the religion of God who part with the present life for that which is to come; for whosoever fighteth for the religion of God, whether he be slain or be victorious, we will surely give him a great reward. The provision of this life is but small; but the future shall be better for him who feareth God.'"

Have you seen the war-horse pawing the earth and snuffing the wind at the sound of the trumpet? Such was Abdallah when Hafiz talked to him of battle; his heart throbbed, his eyes grew dim, and his face flushed. "Oh, God!" he cried, "grant that it may soon be my time; permit me to crush the infidel, and make me worthy of the people from which I have sprung!"

The child of the desert was beautiful indeed in his long blue robe, confined at the waist by a leather thong passed half a score of times round his body. His thick

¹ The sorgho, the principal cereal of the East Indians and the Arabs, which they use like maize and rice.

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brown hair shaded his face, and fell in curls upon his neck from under his hood. His eyes sparkled with a softer light than the planets that twinkle in the heavens, as, holding in his hand a shining lance, wound round with silver thread, he walked slowly, with the grace of a child and the dignity of a man, speaking only when necessary and never laughing. When he returned from the pasture, carrying the young lambs in the skirt of his robe, while the sheep followed him bleating and rubbing their heads against his hand, the shepherds, his companions, stopped to see him pass, and he seemed like Joseph adored by the eleven stars. And at evening, when he raised the stone from the common well with a strength above his age and watered the flocks, the women forgot to fill their pitchers, and cried, "He is as handsome as his father!" to which the men responded, "And he will also be as brave."

CHAPTER IV

THE RECOGNITION

Time had rolled onward since the day that Halima had carried the son of the wealthy Mansour to her tent. Omar was fifteen years old, and was still unacquainted with the secret of his birth. The rude jests of his companions had more than once made him feel that he was not a Beni Amur, and that the blood in his veins was not so pure as that of Abdallah; but, although he was called Omar, the little merchant, no one in the tribe knew who was the Egyptian's father, and he himself believed that he was an orphan, adopted by Halima's goodness, and destined to live in the desert.

One evening, as the brothers were returning from the fields, they were surprised to see several richly capari-

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soned camels at the door of the tent, together with a mule covered with a rich carpet and held by a negro dressed in white.

"Whose mule is this," said Omar, "and what has it brought?"

"It is your father's," answered the slave, who easily recognized Mansour's son by his features; "we have come for you from Djiddah."

"Who is my father?" asked the Egyptian, greatly moved.

"Your father," returned the negro, "is the rich Mansour, the syndic of the Djiddah merchants, and the sultan of the sons of Egypt. There is not a bale of goods, great or small, that comes into the harbor or goes out of the three city gates that is not first offered to him for his disposal. At Yambo, Suez, Khartoom and Cairo, your father's warehouses are kept by his numerous slaves; and so great is his fortune that his servants never consult him about any business involving less than a hundred thousand piastres."

"Oh, my father, where are you?" cried the young man, rushing into the tent. "Praised be God, who has given me a father so worthy of my love!" And he threw himself into Mansour's arms with an ardor that delighted the old merchant and called forth a sigh from Halima.

Early the next morning they set out for Djiddah, to the great sorrow of the Bedouin woman, who could not bear to separate from the child whom she alone had cherished for so many years. "Adieu, my son, and dearer than my son," said she, covering him with tears and caresses. Omar was more courageous; he quitted his mother with the joy of a captive who at once regains freedom and fortune. Abdallah accompanied his brother to the city by the wish of Mansour. To show the Bedouin how far the consideration attached to wealth in a

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city like Djiddah raised a merchant above the shepherds of the desert, and to make him feel that his mother and he should esteem themselves too happy in having loved and served Omar for fifteen years, was Mansour's fashion of paying his debt of gratitude. The rich leave their folly and vanity only beyond the tomb.

No sooner had they reached Djiddah than Omar broke forth into transports of joy. He was an exile returning to his native land. Everything charmed him: the narrow streets, with their great stone houses; the port, where the ships were unloading casks of sugar, sacks of coffee and bales of cotton; and the motley crowd that was thronging toward the bazaar. Turks, Syrians, Greeks, Arabs, Persians, East Indians, blacks of every shade; Jews, pilgrims, dervishes, beggars; Nile merchants mounted on beautifully-caparisoned mules; donkey drivers leading women enveloped in black mantles, and looking like phantoms of which nought was visible but the eyes; camel-drivers shouting to the crowd to open a passage; Arnauts with an audacious and threatening air, proud of their Damascus weapons and flowing fustanella; peaceful smokers seated with crossed legs at the doors of the coffee-houses; slaves led to market—all this was to Omar a Paradise more enchanting than any of which he had ever dreamed. In such an abode, what could not be bought and what could not be sold? Had he not learned the price of all manner of things from his father on the road? Did he not already know how to rate the integrity of a *cadi*, the scruples of a sheik, and even the conscience of a pacha?

At the end of a narrow and gloomy alley stood the house of Mansour. There was nothing about the building calculated to attract attention; the ground floor was bare and uninviting, and furnished only with a

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few rush mats along the whitewashed walls; but on ascending to the next story, which was carefully closed, and furnished with blinds that defied both the sun and curiosity, magnificent rooms met the eye, covered with Turkey carpets, and surrounded with velvet divans embroidered with silver. The travelers were scarcely seated when a chased silver salver was brought them, loaded with jellied fruits. While one slave poured rose-water on Abdallah's bronzed hands, and presented him a napkin fringed with gold, another burned incense before old Mansour, who stroked his beard and clothes to impregnate them with the fragrant smoke; coffee was then served in tiny porcelain cups, set in stands of gold filigree-work, after which exquisite sherbets, prepared from the extract of violets and the juice of pomegranates expressed through the rind, were offered them. Lastly, three little negroes, dressed in scarlet and covered with bracelets and necklaces, lighted long jasmine pipes and presented one to each guest, then all three seated themselves on the ground, attentive and silent.

They smoked long without speaking. Mansour was enjoying the delight which he saw in his son and the admiration which he supposed in the Arab. But the Bedouin's face did not change; amid all the luxury he was as grave and tranquil as if in the midst of his flocks. What are the luxuries of this world to him who expects the lasting rewards which God has in store for the faithful!

"Well, my son," said old Mansour at last, turning toward Abdallah, "are you content with your journey?"

"Father," replied the young man, "I thank you for your hospitality. Your heart is even richer than your treasure."

"Well, well," returned the merchant; "but what I

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want to know is what you think of Djiddah? Would you like to stay with us?"

"No. The city is tainted; the air is pestilential, the water impure. Then those idle dervishes, displaying to all eyes their impudence and their covetousness, and those slaves who stand there to deprive us of the use of our hands, and who spy out our passions to serve them! Huzza for the desert! Our terrible winds are sweeter to me than the hot, heavy air of this prison. Among the tents there are none but men. Each one rights himself, lance in hand. The dog that begs through cowardice is thrust out; the haughty, who know not how to respect those better than themselves, are humbled."

"Your words are golden, my son," said Mansour, running his fingers through his long beard; "a Wahabite could not be more austere. I thought like you when I was a child and recited my nurse's lessons. Stay with us for a time; become a merchant; when you see how fortune invests the vilest of men with authority, youth, and virtue; how the powerful of the day, the women, and even the saints fall down and worship the metal which you despise, you will change your mind, and prefer even the unsavory odor of cities. It is beautiful to live like the lark, free in space; but sooner or later all are snared like it. The dourou is the king of the world, and the day comes when the bravest, like the wisest, is the servant of the richest."

"I know," returned Abdallah, proudly, "that nothing satisfies the sons of Adam; the dust of the grave alone has power to fill their bellies; but in the desert, at least, an ounce of honor is worth more than a hundred weight of gold. With God's aid, I will live like my ancestors. He who desires naught will always be free. Farewell, therefore, Mansour; farewell, my brother."

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To-day our roads part; may that which you take lead you to the end which all the faithful should desire!"

"Farewell, my good Abdallah," answered Omar. "Each of us follows his destiny. What is written is written: you were born to dwell among the tents, and I to be a merchant. Farewell; I will never forget the friendship of my childhood; if ever I am in need of a stout arm, be sure that I shall have recourse to you."

"Thanks, my brother," cried the Bedouin; and, taking Omar in his arms, he pressed him tenderly to his heart, without restraining or hiding his tears.

Omar tranquilly received these proofs of friendship, and when Abdallah, with drooping head and dejected mien, had quitted the house after more than once looking back, "Say," said he to his father, "what can you have been thinking of, to leave me so long with that Bedouin? Suppose you had died, and I had appeared to claim your inheritance, the old men of the city would have said, 'We have known Mansour all our lives, and have never heard of his having either son or daughter,' and then who would have been your heir if not the pacha? Carry me quickly to the bazaar, introduce me to all your friends, the merchants, and, above all, make me your partner, and give me a warehouse of my own. I feel an uncontrollable desire to handle gold. I have already learned to calculate among the tents, and know how to treat men in order to gain much and risk little. You shall not blush for your son."

"My child," cried Mansour, raising his trembling hands to heaven, "wisdom speaks through your mouth; but the day is too far advanced to go out, and, besides, your dress is not suitable. To-morrow we will go to the bazaar; to-morrow all Djiddah shall know my glory and happiness."

All night Omar dreamed of gold and silver; all night Mansour tossed on his bed, unable to close his eyes; he

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saw himself born anew in a son shrewder, more cunning, more covetous, and more avaricious than himself. "Ah!" he exclaimed, in his joy, "I am the happiest of fathers. The dervish did not deceive me: if my son escape the perils that threaten him, who knows where the wealth of my house will stop?"

Madman, thou forgettest that if gold is a blessing to him that gives it, it is a poison to him that hoards it. He who harbors avarice in his heart harbors there the enemy of mankind, and woe to him who chooses Satan for a companion!

CHAPTER V

THE NEW SOLOMON

The next morning at daybreak Mansour led his son to the bath, and dressed him in a style befitting his new condition. A silken robe, striped with bright colors, and confined round the waist by a Cashmere girdle, a flowing caftan of the finest and softest cloth, and a white embroidered cap, round which was twisted a muslin turban—such was the elegant costume brought by the most fashionable tailor of Djiddah. In this dress the features of the Egyptian seemed harsher and his complexion more swarthy than ever. The tailor, however, thought otherwise; he did nothing but praise the beauty and grace of Omar, and pity the ladies of the city who should look with indifference on his countenance, more beautiful than the moon at its full. When nothing more remained of the Bedouin of the day before, breakfast was served and sherbet brought in; then, after sundry counsels from old Mansour, Omar, mounted on a mule, and modestly falling behind his father, took the way with him to the bazaar.

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The Egyptian led his son to a shop which was narrow, like all in the market, but crowded with precious articles. Shawls from India, satins and brocades from China, carpets from Bassora, yataghans in their chased silver scabbards, pipes mounted with amber and adorned with rubies, rosaries of black coral, necklaces of sequins and pearls, all that could seduce women, all that could ruin men, was found in this warehouse of perdition. A stone bench ran before the shop. Mansour seated himself on the cushions and lighted his pipe; Omar took his beads and began to recite his prayers, without looking at the crowd.

As soon as the merchants perceived the syndic, they rose in a body, and went to repeat the Fát-háh, and to wish him good-morning. Everyone looked with surprise at the new-comer, and asked his neighbor in a whisper who the stranger could be—whether a relative of the Egyptian, or a young slave richly dressed in order to draw customers. Mansour called to the sheik, and, pointing to Omar, "This is my son," said he—"my partner and successor."

"Your son!" exclaimed the sheik. "Who ever heard that the rich Mansour had an heir?"

"I wished to deceive the evil eye," replied the old man; "this is why I have had my son brought up at a distance and in secret. I did not intend to present him to you till his beard was grown; but I was getting old. I became impatient; and to-day, with your permission, I shall place him in the bazaar to learn of you the art of buying and selling."

"Mansour is always wise," replied the merchants, as they vied with each other in congratulating the happy father of such a son. "May the Lord," they exclaimed, "preserve both root and branch!"

In the midst of these wishes, which tickled the Egyptian's pride, the sheik took up the conversation.

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"Among us," said he to Mansour, "when a son or daughter is born, even the poor man invites his friends to rejoice with him; have you forgotten us?"

"Honor me with a visit this evening," replied the old man; "you shall be welcome."

An hour after, a messenger, carrying a huge bouquet, went through the market offering a flower to each merchant, with the words, "Recite the Fât-háh for the Prophet." The prayer ended, "Mansour entreats you," added the messenger, "to take coffee with him this evening at his house."

"Mansour is the prince of the generous," returned the invited guests; "with the blessing of God, we will pay our respects this evening to the syndic."

At the appointed time, the Egyptian and his son received the merchants in the little garden, where a splendid feast awaited the guests. Lambs stuffed with almonds, and pistachio nuts, rice and saffron, cream sauces flavored with pepper, rose jellies, pastry of all kinds, nothing was spared to honor guests of such consequence. For the first time Mansour desired that the poor should partake of his joy, and ordered the remains of the feast, with some small silver coin, to be distributed among them before the door, which was enough to fill the street with huzzas and blessings, and to cause the name of the generous Omar and the rich Mansour to resound from one end of Djiddah to the other.

Coffee served and the pipes lighted, the sheik took Omar by the hand: "Behold our friend's son," said he to the merchants, "who desires to enter our honorable company. I beseech each one to recite the Fât-háh for the Prophet."

While the prayer was being three times repeated, the sheik wound a shawl round Omar's waist, tying a knot after each Fât-háh. The ceremony finished, the young

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man kissed the hand of the sheik and the other spectators, beginning with the eldest. His eyes sparkled with joy. He was a Djiddah merchant; he was rich; the world was opening before him.

The rest of the evening was passed in conversation, all bearing upon trade. Omar did not open his lips; he stood near the elders of the party, who did not weary of talking to a young man who listened with such attention and respect. They told him how a good salesman should always ask four times the value of the article haggled for, and should never lose his coolness, which is the secret of the trade. Trading is like trout-fishing; it is necessary to draw on the customer and give him line till, wearied and dazzled, he at length knows no longer how to defend himself. To toy with a rosary, offer coffee or a pipe, talk of indifferent things, preserve an unmoved countenance, and yet kindle desire in the soul of the purchaser, is a difficult act, not to be learned in a day. "But," they added, caressing Omar, "you are in a good school, my son; neither Jew nor even Armenian can overreach the wise Mansour."

"Is commerce nothing more than this?" said the young man in his heart; "in that case I have no need of these people. To think only and always of one's self, and to make use of the passions or weaknesses of others to strip fools of the wealth they dote on—I have known this from my birth; I did nothing else in the desert; my masters will be shrewd, indeed, if, before six months are past, I do not give them a lesson."

A few days after, Mansour repaired to the cadi on account of a suit, the issue of which troubled him but little. A private conversation with the judge had given him hopes of the justice of his cause. The old man asked his son to accompany him, in order to accustom him early to deal with the law. The cadi was seated in the court-yard of the mosque. He was a fat, good-

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looking man, who never thought, and talked little, which, added to his large turban and his air of perpetual astonishment, gave him a great reputation for justice and gravity. The spectators were numerous; the principal merchants were seated on the ground on carpets, forming a semi-circle around the magistrate. Mansour took his seat a little way from the sheik, and Omar placed himself between the two, his curiosity strongly excited to see how the law was obeyed, and how it was trifled with in case of need.

The first case called was that of a young Banian, as yellow as an orange, with loose-flowing robes and an effeminate air, who had lately landed from India, and who complained of having been cheated by one of Mansour's rivals.

"Having found a casket full of diamonds among the effects bequeathed to me by my father at Delhi," said the young man, "I set out for Egypt in order to live there in opulence on the proceeds of their sale. I was obliged by bad weather to put in at Djiddah, where I was retained by the pleasures of the city, and soon found myself in want of money. I was assured that, if I wished to dispose of my diamonds, I should find a good market here. I went to the bazaar, and inquired for a dealer in precious stones. The richest, I was told, was Mansour, the most honest was Ali the jeweler. I applied to the latter. As soon as he learned the object of my visit, he welcomed me like a son, and, refusing to talk of business at the bazaar, carried me home with him. For several days he treated me in the most generous manner, gained my confidence by every kind of attention, and advanced me all the money I needed. One day, after dinner, when I was not quite sober, he asked me for the casket, examined the diamonds one by one, and said, with feigned pity, 'My child, these stones are of little value in Arabia and Egypt. The

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rocks of our desert furnish them by thousands; my coffers are full of them.' To prove the truth of what he said, he opened a box, and, taking therefrom a diamond thrice as large as any of mine, gave it to the slave that was with me.

"What will become of me!" I cried. "I have no other fortune; I thought myself rich, and here I am poor, a stranger, and far from my family and country."

"My child," replied the treacherous jeweler, "I conceived a friendship for you at first sight. A Mussulman never forsakes his friends in trouble. Leave this casket with me, and, to oblige you, I will give you a price for it such as no one else would offer. Choose whatever you wish in Djiddah—gold, silver or coral—and in two hours I promise to give you an equal weight of what you have chosen in exchange for your Indian stones."

"On returning home, night brought reflection. I made inquiries, and soon learned that Ali had been fooling me. What he had given to the slave was nothing but a bit of crystal. Diamonds are scarcer at Djiddah than in India, and are worth ten times their weight in gold. I demanded my casket. Ali refused to restore it. Venerable magistrate, my sole hope is in your justice. I entreat you to espouse the cause of a stranger, and may the wretch who has ruined me drink boiling water for all eternity!"

It was Ali's turn to speak. "Illustrious servant of God," said he to the cadì, "this young man's story is true in but one particular, namely, that we have made a bargain, and that I am ready to keep it. All the rest is of his own invention. What matters it what I gave the slave? could a sensible man have seen in it anything else than a jest? Did I force the stranger to leave this casket in my hands? Was it my fault if want of money made him accept my conditions? Why does he accuse

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me of treachery? Have I broken my word, and has he kept his?"

"Young man," said the *cadi* to the Banian, "have you witnesses to prove that Ali deceived you as to the value of your merchandise? If not, I shall put the accused on his oath, as the law decrees."

A Koran was brought. Ali placed his right hand on the sacred book, and repeated three times, "In the name of God the Omnipotent, and by the word of God that is contained in this book, I swear that I have not deceived this stranger. I swear it here to-day," he added, turning toward the assembly, "as I shall swear it on the judgment-day before God as *cadi*, with the angels for witnesses."

"Wretch," said the Banian, "thou art among those whose feet go down to destruction. Thou hast thrown away thy soul."

"That may be," whispered the sheik to Omar, "but he has gained a huge fortune. This Ali is a shrewd knave."

"He is no ordinary man," added Monsour. "This may be called a game well played."

Omar smiled, and, while Ali was enjoying the success of his ruse, he approached the stranger, who burst into tears.

"Do you wish me to help you to gain the suit?" asked he.

"Yes," cried the East Indian; "confound the wretch, and you may ask of me what you will. But you are only a child; you can do nothing."

"I only ask you to have confidence in me for a few moments," returned the Egyptian. "Accept Ali's bargain; let me choose in your stead, and fear nothing."

"What can I fear after having lost all?" murmured the stranger, letting his head fall again on his bosom like a man bereft of all hope. Nevertheless, he turned

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to the cadì, and, bowing respectfully, "Oh, my lord and master," said he, "thy slave implores a last favor of thy mercy; let the bargain be consummated, since the law decrees it, but permit this young man to choose in my stead what I shall receive in payment."

A profound silence ensued. Omar rose, and, bowing to the cadì, "Ali," said he to the jeweler, "you have doubtless brought the casket, and can tell us the weight thereof?"

"Here it is," said the merchant; "it weighs twenty pounds. Choose what you will, I repeat; if the thing asked for is to be found in Djiddah, you shall have it within two hours, otherwise the bargain is null and void. All know that my word is sacred, and that I never break it."

"What we desire," said Omar, raising his voice, "is ants' wings, half male and half female. You have two hours in which to furnish the twenty pounds you have promised us."

"This is absurd," cried the jeweler; "it is impossible. I should need half a score of persons and six months' labor to satisfy this foolish demand. It is trifling with justice to introduce these childish caprices into this place."

"Are there any winged ants in Djiddah?" asked the cadì.

"Of course," answered the merchants, laughing; "they are one of the plagues of Egypt. Our houses are full of them, and it would be doing us a great service to rid us of them."

"Then Ali must keep his promise or give back the casket," said the cadì. "This young man was mad to sell his diamonds weight for weight; he is mad to exact such a payment. So much the better for Ali the first time; so much the worse for him the second. Justice has not two weights and measures. Every bargain

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holds good before the law. Either furnish twenty pounds of ants' wings, or restore the casket to the Banian."

"A righteous judgment," shouted the spectators, wonder-struck at such equity.

The stranger, beside himself with joy, embraced Omar, calling him his saviour and master; nor did he stop there: taking from the casket three diamonds of the finest water, as large as nightingales' eggs, he forced them on Omar, who put them in his girdle, respectfully kissed the Banian's right hand, and seated himself by his father, his gravity unmoved by the gaze of the assembly.

"Well done, my friend," said Mansour; "but Ali is a novice; had he not neglected the *cadi* he would have gained his suit. It is my turn now; mark me well, and profit by the lesson I shall give you. Stop, young man!" he cried to the East Indian, who was carrying off the diamonds, "we have an account to settle. I entreat the illustrious *cadi* to keep this casket for a moment; there may be those here who have a better right to it than either this stranger or the prudent Ali."

There was universal surprise among the spectators, and all listened to the new claimant.

"The day before yesterday," said Mansour, "a veiled lady entered my shop in the bazaar and asked to look at some necklaces. Nothing that I showed her pleased her taste, and she was about to leave the shop, when she spied a sealed box in a corner, and entreated me to open it. This box contained a set of topazes which were no longer at my disposal, having been already sold to the Pacha of Egypt. I told the lady this, but she insisted on at least seeing the gift destined for a sultana. A woman's wish is a thing not easily thwarted. There are three kinds of obstinacy that are irresistible—that of princes, of children, and of women. I was so weak

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as to yield. The stranger looked at the necklace, tried it on, and declared that she would have it at any price. On my refusal, she quitted the bazaar, loading me with threats and maledictions. An hour after, this young man entered my shop, and, bursting into tears, kissed my hand and entreated me to sell him the necklace, saying that his own life and that of the lady depended on it. 'Ask of me what you will, my father,' said he, 'but I must have these gems or die.' I have a weakness for young men, and, though I knew the danger of disappointing my master and pacha, I was unable to resist his supplications. "Take the topazes," said I to the stranger, 'but promise to give whatever I may ask in exchange.' 'My head itself, if you will, for you have saved my life,' he replied, as he carried off the necklace. We were without witnesses," added Mansour, turning to the Banian, "but is not my story true?"

"Yes," said the young man, "and I beg your pardon for not having satisfied you sooner: you know the cause. Now that I have recovered my fortune, thanks to your son, ask of me what you desire."

"What I desire," said Mansour, nodding to the pacha, who was gazing fixedly at a palm-tree, "what I desire is this casket with all its contents. It is not too much for a man who risks his life by disobeying the pacha. Illustrious magistrate, your excellency has declared that all bargains hold good before the law; this young man has promised to give me what I please; now I declare that nothing pleases me but these diamonds."

The cadi raised his head and looked about the assembly as if to interrogate the faces, then stroked his beard and relapsed into his meditations.

"Ali is defeated," said the sheik to Omar, with a smile. "The fox is not yet born more cunning than the worthy Mansour."

"I am lost!" cried the Banian. "Oh, Omar, have

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you saved me only to cast me down from the highest pinnacle of joy to the depths of despair? Persuade your father to spare me, that I may owe my life to you a second time."

"Well, my son," said Mansour, "doubtless you are shrewd, but this will teach you that your father knows rather more than you do. The *cadi* is about to decide: try whether you can dictate his decree."

"It is mere child's play," answered Omar, shrugging his shoulders; "but, since you desire it, my father, you shall lose your suit." He rose, and, taking a *piastre* from his girdle, put it into the hand of the *Banian*, who laid it before the judge.

"Illustrious *cadi*," said he, "this young man is ready to fulfil his engagement. This is what he offers Mansour—a *piastre*. In itself, this coin is of little value;¹ but examine it closely, and you will see that it is stamped with the likeness of the sultan, our glorious master. May God destroy and confound all who disobey his highness; It is this precious likeness that we offer you," added Omar, turning to Mansour; "if it pleases you, you are paid; to dare to say that it displeases you is an insult to the pacha, a crime punishable by death; and I am sure that our worthy *cadi* will not become your accomplice—he who always has been and always will be the faithful servant of all the sultans."

When Omar had finished speaking, all eyes turned toward the *cadi*, who, more impenetrable than ever, stroked his face and waited for the old man to come to his aid. Mansour was agitated and embarrassed. The silence of the *cadi* and the assembly terrified him, and he cast a supplicating glance toward his son.

"My father," said Omar, "permit this young man to thank you for the lesson of prudence which you have

¹ About two pence.

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given him by frightening him a little. He knows well that it was you who sent me to his aid, and that all this is a farce. No one is deceived by hearing the son oppose the father, and who has ever doubted Mansour's experience and generosity?"

"No one," interrupted the *cadi*, starting up like a man suddenly awakened from a dream, "and I least of all; and this is why I have permitted you to speak, my young Solomon. I wished to honor in you the wisdom of your father; but another time avoid meddling with his highness's name; it is not safe to sport with the lion's paws. The matter is settled. The necklace is worth a hundred thousand piastres, is it not, Mansour? This madcap shall give you, therefore, a hundred thousand piastres, and all parties will be satisfied."

Despite his modesty, Omar could not escape the gratitude of the East Indian or the praises of the merchants. The former tried to force the casket into his hands; and it was impossible to prevent him from seizing the bridle of the mule that carried Omar, and accompanying to his door him whom he styled the most generous and wisest of men. The merchants, on their side, heaped congratulations on Mansour; and the celebrated case which called forth the wisdom of him whom the sagacious *cadi* styled the new Solomon is still talked of at Djiddah.

Once at home, Mansour broke forth into reproaches. "I cannot understand you, my son," said he. "I had a fortune in my hands, and you have snatched it from me. Is this your idea of business? Is this the respect that you show your father?"

"Have patience, my father," replied Omar, coldly. "To-day I have made myself a reputation for prudence and probity. It is a noise that will be lasting, a first impression that will never be effaced. Reputation is a jewel which nothing can replace; it is ten thousand

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times more valuable capital than your diamonds. All distrust Mansour's cunning, but all will confide, like this foreigner, in Omar's honesty and integrity. The bait is thrown, the trout will not be long in coming."

Mansour stood confounded. He had desired a son that should be worthy of himself; he began to fear that Eblis had granted his prayer too literally. He admired Omar indeed; such calculation at so tender an age could not but delight a man whose whole life had been one of calculation. But—it must be confessed to the old man's shame—this precocious experience chilled his heart, and, to tell the truth, he stood appalled before this sage of fifteen.

CHAPTER VI

VIRTUE REWARDED

Nothing was wanting to Mansour's happiness; during the five remaining years of his life the merchant could fully enjoy the education and success of his son. He saw all his trade pass into Omar's hands; the wealth of his house became enormous, and, as is always the case, public esteem increased in proportion to wealth. How could Omar help succeeding? He had everything in his favor; an abundance of money, few passions, and no scruples. None had ever combined to such a degree what constitutes genius in business—love of gold and contempt of men. Mansour could therefore breathe his last in peace. His life had been long, disease had spared his old age, his dreams were realized, and he was sure of leaving an heir behind him who would keep and increase the fortune accumulated with such difficulty; yet it is affirmed that the Egyptian died with his heart filled with rage, crying out that no one loved him, exe-

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crating his folly, and trembling at the sight of his treasures, as if the gold, heated in the infernal fire, already lay a burning weight on his breast and brow.

Omar heard of his father's death with complete resignation. Business had called him away from his dying bed; business was his consolation. His courage was worthy of admiration; at the mere sight of a piastre, he dried up his tears and stifled his sorrow.

Left alone with so noble an inheritance, the son of Mansour set no bounds to his desires. Nothing escaped his schemes; it seemed as if from within his little house in Djiddah, like the spider in his web, he drew all the wealth of the world into his invisible net. Rice and sugar from India; gum and coffee from Yemen; ivory, gold dust, and slaves from Abyssinia; corn from Egypt; tissues from Syria; ships and caravans—all came to Omar. Yet never did man welcome good fortune more modestly. To see him in the street in his rusty clothes and scanty turban, his eyes cast down, telling his wooden beads with his fingers, he would not have been thought worth twenty thousand piastres. Nothing betrayed the rich man in his conversation; he was familiar with his inferiors, free and easy with his equals, cringing toward those from whom he hoped for anything, and respectful toward those who had it in their power to do him an injury. According to him, it was a great mistake to attribute to him a large fortune; all this merchandise was not his property, but consignments from foreign correspondents who had confidence in him—a confidence which must have cost him dear, for he constantly complained of losing money. If he bought the handsomest slaves, the richest perfumes, the choicest tobacco, and the rarest stuffs, it was always for some pacha or foreign trader. It was whispered that these treasures never left the Egyptian's house—who can silence men's tongues?—but nothing certain was known.

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Omar had no friends, transacted his business at the bazaar, and received no visits. Whether he was poor or rich, a sage or an egotist, humble or hypocritical, was the secret of Satan.

His prudence was on a par with his modesty. Beginning with the pacha and ending with the collector of customs, there was not an officer at Djiddah, great or small, with whose pipe-bearer, groom, or favorite slave Omar was not acquainted. He was not fond of giving, and often repeated the maxim of the Koran that prodigals are the brethren of Satan, but he knew how to open his hand at the right time, and no one ever repented a service rendered this honest man. Pachas pass away quickly at Djiddah; the hand of the Turk is heavy, and the richest merchants were often forced to pay a ransom. The son of Mansour alone escaped these loans, which are never repaid. Within a week, by one means or another, he was the friend, it was even said the banker, of the new governor, and the storm which had threatened him always burst on other heads than his, so that he was an object of astonishment and envy to all his brethren.

The day came, however, when the star paled. A pacha, who had made a fortune in three months in rather too obvious a manner, was recalled to Constantinople, and his successor received orders to be an honest man, the government being anxious to please the Franks, of whom, unhappily, it stood in need, and who were raising a great outcry. Turk as he was, the new pacha understood how to give satisfaction in high places. The day after his arrival, he went in disguise to buy provisions of the chief butcher and baker in Djiddah. The mohtesib, or inspector of the market, was forewarned, and was ready in the street, with his clerks and great scales, to weigh what the pacha had just bought. The twelve pounds of bread fell short

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two ounces, and the huge quarter of mutton one ounce. The crime was a flagrant one, and the offenders were speedily brought to justice. The pacha overwhelmed the wretches who fattened on the sweat of the people with abuse and reproaches, and, in his just anger, refused to listen to their defence, but ordered them to be instantly stripped, bound, and bastinadoed, after which, by express command, the baker was nailed by the ear to his shop door, and the butcher was fastened to one of the windows of the great mosque, after having his nose pierced with an iron wire, from which the ounce of meat which he had stolen was suspended. The populace heaped every species of outrage upon the two unfortunates; God was glorified throughout the whole city, the pacha was styled the friend of the people, the lover of justice, and the new Haroun Al-Raschid; and the story of this virtuous deed, after rejoicing the sultan, spread to the West, to the confusion and despair of the infidels.

The same evening several of the merchants freighted a ship for Egypt, having suddenly learned that their presence was needed at Cairo. Omar, instead of giving way to terror, calmly stroked his beard. "Virtue is a kind of merchandise not in the market," thought he; "when it is needed, therefore, it must be bought dear." Whereupon he repaired to the bazaar, chanced to meet the pacha's secretary, made him sit down beside him, and offered him a pipe by mistake that had been designed for the sultan.

"It is always bad policy to do justice to the people," said Omar to the secretary; "once led into bad habits, they grow exacting. It is a death-blow to large speculations." The secretary gazed at his magnificent pipe, and thought Omar a man of sense.

Alas! the Egyptian had judged but too rightly. The first market-day grain was found to have risen two

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piastres an ardeb.¹ The populace became excited; two men especially talked with extreme vehemence—the butcher whose nose had been slit and the one-eared baker. The cheats of yesterday had become the heroes of to-day; they were pitied as victims, and the more they clamored, the more they were admired.

From word to deed there is but a step among the populace. The mob was already attempting to burst open Omar's house when the chief of the police, surrounded by soldiers, came to summon the merchant before the pacha. Omar received the officer with an emotion that may be easily understood, and fervently glued his lips to his hand; but the chief of the police hastily withdrew it, and thrust it clenched into his girdle, as if polluted by the kiss of a criminal. Nevertheless, he neither abused nor maltreated the son of Mansour, to the great displeasure of the populace, which loves justice, and is not sorry to see a man accused of crime treated as though convicted of it, especially when he is rich; on the contrary, the chief of the police more than once urged the prisoner to rely on the equity of the governor.

"What is written is written," replied the Egyptian, telling his beads one by one.

The doors of the palace were open, and the people thronged into the court-yard, where the pacha sat, grave and impassive, calming the turbulent passions around him by his presence. The two accusers were brought forward; the governor commanded them to speak without fear. "Justice for all is my duty," said he aloud; "rich or poor, no plunderer shall find grace in my sight."

"God is great and the pacha is just," cried the crowd; whereupon four merchants, quaking with fear, were thrust before the tribunal, all of whom kissed the

¹ About five bushels.

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Koran, and swore that Omar had bought from them all the corn imported from Egypt.

"Death! death!" cried the people. The pacha made a sign that the accused should be heard, and silence ensued.

"Oh, my lord and master," cried Omar, prostrating his forehead on the earth, "your slave places his head in your hands. God loves those who show mercy; the meaner the culprit, the more noble is it not to crush him. Solomon himself spared the ant. It is true that I have bought a few cargoes of corn in the harbor of Djiddah, as any honest merchant may do; but all here, except my enemies, know that the purchase was made for my master the sultan. This corn is designed for the troops posted by your highness on the road to Mecca for the protection of the pilgrims; so, at least, I was told by your highness's secretary, when he gave me the money in your name, which a poor man like me was not able to advance. May my master pardon me for delaying so long to send him the thousand ardebs of corn that he ordered; the chief of the police will tell your highness that force alone has prevented me from obeying him."

"What do you mean by a thousand ardebs of corn?" asked the governor, fiercely.

"Forgive me, my lord," returned Omar, in an agitated voice, "I am so much troubled that it is difficult for me to reckon correctly. I believe that it was fifteen hundred," he added, gazing at the contracted features of the pacha, "if not, indeed, two thousand."

"It was three thousand," said the secretary, handing a paper to the governor. "Here is the order given to this man, in my own handwriting, under the seal of your highness."

"And has the merchant received the money?" asked the pacha, in a softened tone.

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"Yes, your excellency," replied Omar, bowing anew. "The chief of the police, here present, will tell you that he transmitted this order to me, and your highness's secretary advanced me yesterday the two hundred thousand piastres which I needed for the purchase. I am therefore responsible to the pacha for two hundred thousand piastres or three thousand ardebs of corn."

"Then what is all this noise about?" exclaimed the pacha, looking savagely at the two frightened accusers. "Is this the respect you pay my master the sultan? Are the soldiers who protect the holy pilgrims to die of famine in the desert? Seize these two knaves, and give each of them thirty strokes of the bastinado. Justice for all, and no grace for false witnesses. To accuse an innocent man is to rob him of more than life."

"Well said," cried the multitude; "the pacha is right."

The sentence pronounced, the butcher was seized by four soldiers, who did not scruple to do justice in their own cause. A running noose was passed round the prisoner's ankles and fastened to a stake, after which one of the Arnauts, armed with a stick, beat the soles of his feet with all his might. The butcher was a hero in his way; he counted the strokes one by one, and, the punishment being ended, was carried off by his friends, casting furious glances at Omar. The one-eared man was less resolute; at every blow he uttered Allah! with a groan that might have melted a heart of stone. At the twelfth stroke Omar kissed the ground before the pacha and entreated pardon for the culprit, which was graciously granted. This was not all; he slipped a douro into the wounded man's hand before all the people, and declared that he had thirty ardebs of corn left, which should be divided among the poor, then returned home amid the blessings of those very persons who, an hour before, were ready to tear him to pieces. Praises or threats, he received both with the same hu-

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mility or the same indifference. "Allah be praised!" said he, on entering the house. "The pacha drove rather a hard bargain, but now I have him in my hands."

Tranquil in this respect, the son of Mansour resumed his ingenious schemes. Thanks to him, the wealth of Djiddah increased daily. One morning, on waking, the slave-dealers learned with joy that the price of their merchandise had doubled. Unfortunately, they had sold all they had the day before to Omar, to fill an order from Egypt. The next month it was rice, then tobacco, wax, coffee, sugar, and gold dust. Everything rose in value; but Omar's correspondents were always the ones that profited by this sudden rise. In this manner Djiddah became an opulent market, so wealthy, indeed, that the poor could no longer live there, though the rich acquired fortunes by buying the good graces of the Egyptian.

As to him, seated every day at his counter, more honeyed than ever to those of whom he had need, he passed the hours in counting on his beads the millions of piastres that he accumulated in all directions. He said to himself in his heart that, despised as he was, he was the master of men, and that, should he need the assistance of the sultan, he was rich enough to buy him as well as his seraglio into the bargain.

Men do not grow rich with impunity. It is as impossible to hide fortune as smoke. Despite all his humility, Omar received an invitation from the grand sherif of Mecca to repair to Taif for an important service, which he alone, it was said, could render the descendant of the Prophet. The merchant was less elated by the honor than dismayed at the service which might be asked of him. "The rich have two kinds of foes," said he, "the small and the great. The first are like the ants, that empty the house grain by grain; the

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second like the lion, the king of robbers, that flays us with one stroke of his paw. But, with patience and cunning, it is easier to shake off the lion than the ant. Let us see what the sherif desires; if he wishes to deceive me, I will not be duped by him; if he wishes to deceive he shall give me the worth of the money."

It was with this respect for the Commander of the Faithful that Omar took the way to Taif. The sight of the desert soon changed the current of his thoughts. The tents and the clumps of palm-trees scattered amid the sands recalled his childhood, and for the first time his brother Abdallah recurred to his memory. "Who knows," he thought, "whether by chance I may not need him?"

CHAPTER VII

BARSIM

While the son of Mansour abandoned himself to the love of gain, as if he were to live forever, Abdallah grew in piety, wisdom, and virtue. He had adopted his father's calling, and guided the caravans between Yambo, Medina, and Mecca. As ardent as the young horse that flings his mane to the wind, and as prudent as a greybeard, he had gained the confidence of the principal merchants, and, despite his youth, it was he that was recommended by preference to the pilgrims when they thronged from all parts of the world, in the sacred month, to march seven times round the holy Caaba, encamp on Mount Arafat, and offer sacrifices in the valley of the Mina. These journeys were not without peril. The Bedouin had more than once risked his life to protect those under his keeping, but he had fought so well that all on his route were beginning to respect

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and fear him. The aged Hafiz never quitted his pupil; crippled as he was, he always found means to be useful. Wherever there are men there are always stout arms and resolute hearts, but not always a faithful friend and wise counsellor.

This life, interspersed with repose and alarm, peace and danger, was delightful to the son of Yusuf. To live a brave man, and die like a soldier, in case of need, as his father had done, was Abdallah's sole ambition. His wishes went no farther. Nevertheless a cloud overshadowed the serenity of his soul. Halima had told him of the dervish, and the child of the desert thought continually of the mysterious plant which had the gift of bestowing happiness and virtue.

Hafiz, to whom Abdallah first opened his heart, saw in this thought nothing but a wile of Satan. "What is the use of troubling yourself?" he said. "God tells us how to please him in the Koran; he has but one law; do what he bids, and have no farther anxiety; our business is only with the present moment."

These words failed to appease the curiosity of Abdallah. Hafiz had told him so many marvels which he did not doubt, why should he not believe the story of this talisman to be true, and why might not one of the faithful discover it? "We dwellers among the tents are unlearned," thought the Bedouin; "what hinders me from questioning the pilgrims? God has dispersed the truth abroad throughout the earth; who knows whether some hadji of the East or West may not know the secret which I am seeking? The dervish did not answer my mother at random; and, with God's help, I will find the right path."

A short time after, Abdallah guided to Mecca a caravan of pilgrims from Egypt. At the head of the troop was a physician, who talked constantly, laughed without ceasing, and doubted everything—a Frank, it was said,

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who had abjured his errors to enter the service of the pacha. Abdallah resolved to question him. As they passed a meadow, he gathered a sprig of shamrock in blossom, and presenting it to the stranger, "Is this plant known in your country?" said he.

"Certainly," answered the physician. "It is what you call 'barsim,' and we 'trifolium.' It is the Alexandrian trefoil, family leguminosæ, calyx tubular, corolla persistent, petals divided into three segments or foliolæ, and sometimes into four or even five, though this is an exception, or, as we say, a monstrosity."

"Is there no species of shamrock, then, in your country that always has four leaves?"

"No, my young scholar, neither in my country nor anywhere else. Why do you ask?"

Abdallah gave him his confidence, whereupon he burst out laughing. "My child," said he, "the dervish was fooling your mother. She asked what was impossible of him, and he promised her what was impossible."

"Why should not God create a four-leaved shamrock if he wished?" asked the Bedouin, wounded by the stranger's disdainful smile.

"Why, young man? Because the earth produced all the plants on one day by virtue of a germinating power which was then exhausted. Since the time of King Solomon there has been nothing new under the sun."

"And if God wished to work a miracle, is His power exhausted?" said Hafiz, who had approached the travelers; "He who drew the seven heavens and the seven earths from the smoke in the space of two days, and set them five hundred days' march from each other—He who ordered the night to envelop the day—He who planted life everywhere, could He not add a new blade of grass to the millions of plants which He has created for the food and pleasure of man?"

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"Certainly," replied the physician, in a mocking tone; "I am too good a Mussulman to pretend the contrary. God might also send his thunderbolt to light my pipe that has just gone out, but He does not wish to do it; on the contrary, He wishes me to ask you for a little fire." With these words he began to puff his pipe and to whistle a foreign air.

"Accursed be unbelievers!" cried the cripple. "Come, my son, leave this miscreant, whose breath is death. If it is in punishment for our sins that God has given the Franks the knowledge that makes their power, it is also to chastise these dogs, and hurry them faster toward the bottomless pit. Madmen, who, to deny God, make use of his very power, and the perpetual miracle of his goodness! Begone, infidel!" he added, raising his hand to heaven, as if to call down its thunders on the head of the renegade; "begone, ingrate, who turnest thy back upon the Lord! God beholds the innermost recesses of thy soul; thou wilt die in despair, and wilt feed forever on the tree of hell, with its bitter fruit and poisoned thorns."

At the other end of the caravan walked a Persian, with a white beard and a tall sheepskin hat, the poorest and most aged of the band, as well as the most despised, for he was of a heretical nation. The old man seemed unconscious of his poverty, age, and solitude. He spoke to no one, ate little, and smoked all day long. Perched on a lean camel, he passed his whole time in turning in his fingers the ninety-nine beads of his rosary, lifting his trembling head meanwhile toward heaven, and murmuring mysterious words. The poor man's gentleness and piety had touched Abdallah's heart. Too young as yet to know hatred, it was with the heretic that the son of Yusuf sought a refuge from the unbeliever.

The animated face and sparkling eyes of the young guide touched the heart of the dervish, who welcomed

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the confidence that he divined with a kindly smile. "My son," said he, "God give thee the wit of Plato, the knowledge of Aristotle, the star of Alexander, and the happiness of Cosroes!"

"My father, thou speakest well," cried Abdallah; "it is knowledge that I need; not the knowledge of a heathen, but that of a true Mussulman, to whom faith opens the treasure of truth."

"Speak, my son," returned the old man; "perchance I can serve thee. Truth is like the pearl: he alone possesses it who has plunged into the depths of life and torn his hands on the rocks of time. What thou seekest I perhaps have found. Who knows whether I may not be able to give thee the light which thou enviest, and which is now valueless to my dim eyes?"

Won by such kindliness, Abdallah poured out his soul before the dervish, who listened in silence. The confidence ended, the old man for his sole answer drew a lock of white wool from the mat on which he was sitting, and cast it to the wind; then, swaying his body like a drunken man, and fixing a strange gaze on Abdallah, he improvised the following lines:—

"Tulip with dark corolla, charming cypress,
Young man, with eyes more black and soft than
 night,
Seest thou yon white speck fluttering in the breeze?
Thus pass our days—a dream that soon is told!
The desert rain less speedily dries up,
The falling rose less quickly fades away;
All cheats or fails us, and the noblest life
Is but the long sigh of a last adieu.
God alone is true; God alone is great; alone is God!
Would'st thou, my child, that in the sacred book
Thy guardian angel should inscribe thy name?
Flee the intoxicating joys of sense,

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God loves a heart unsullied by the world;
The body naught is but a sepulchre;
Happy the man who breaks its deadening bonds,
To plunge into the depths of boundless love!
To live in God is death; to die in God is life!"

"Thy words inflame my heart," said Abdallah; "but thou dost not answer me."

"What, my son!" cried the mystic, "dost thou not understand me? The four-leaved shamrock does not exist on earth; thou must seek it elsewhere. The four-leaved shamrock is a symbol—it is the impossible, the ineffable, the infinite! Wouldst thou possess it? I will reveal to thee the secret. Stifle thy senses; become blind, mute, and deaf; quit the city of existence; be like a traveller in the kingdom of nothingness; plunge into ecstatic rapture; and when nothing more causes your heart to beat, when you have encircled your brow with the glorious crown of death, then, my son, thou wilt find eternal love, and be swallowed up in it like a drop of water in the vast ocean. This is life! When nothing was yet in being, love existed; when nothing more remains, love will endure; it is the first and the last; it is God and man; it is the Creator and the creature; it is the height above and the depth below; it is everything."

"Old man," said the Bedouin, affrighted, "age has weakened thy reason; thou dost not feel that thou art blaspheming. God alone existed before the world had being, God alone will remain when the heavens shall have crushed the earth in their fall. He is the first and the last, the manifest and the hidden; he is mighty and wise; he knoweth all things, and is able to do all things."

The old man did not hear; he seemed in a dream; his lips moved, his eyes were fixed and sightless; a

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vision carried far from the earth this victim of the delusions of Satan. Abdallah returned mournfully to Hafiz and related to him this new disappointment.

"My child," said the cripple, "flee these madmen who intoxicate themselves with visions, like others with opium or hasheesh. They are idolaters who worship themselves. Poor fools! does the eye create the light? Does the mind of man create the truth? Woe to him who draws from his brain a world lighter and more hollow than a bubble; woe to him who sets man on the throne of God! As soon as he enters the city of dreams he is lost; God is effaced, faith evaporates, the will becomes lifeless, and the soul is stifled; it is the reign of darkness and death."

CHAPTER VIII

THE JEW

Youth is the season of hope and desire. Despite his discomfiture, Abdallah did not tire of questioning the pilgrims whom he guided to Mecca, still relying on a happy chance; but Persia, Syria, Egypt, Turkey, and India were mute; no one had heard of the four-leaved shamrock. Hafiz condemned a curiosity which he thought guilty, while Halima consoled her son by making him believe that she still hoped with him.

One day, when Abdallah had retired to his tent more melancholy than usual, and was debating in his own mind whether he would not do well to quit his tribe and go to foreign lands in search of the talisman that evaped his grasp, a Jew entered the enclosure to ask hospitality. He was a little old man, dressed in rags, so thin that his girdle seemed to cut him in two. Leaning on a staff, he slowly dragged along his feet,

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wrapped in bloody rags, as he raised his head from time to time, and looked around as if imploring pity. His wrinkled brow, his inflamed eyelids, his thin lips, which scarcely covered his toothless gums, his disordered beard, which fell to his waist, everything about him bespoke want and suffering. The stranger perceived Abdallah, and stretched out his trembling hand to him, murmuring in a weak voice, "Oh, master of the tent, behold a guest of God!"

Wholly absorbed in his thoughts, the son of Yusuf heard nothing. The old man had already thrice repeated his prayer, when, unhappily, he turned his head toward a neighboring tent, where a negress was nursing her child. At the sight of the Jew the woman hid her babe to preserve it from the evil eye, and, rushing from her tent, cried, "Begone, thou wretch worthy to be stoned! Hast thou come here to bring misfortune? May as many curses light on thee as there are hairs in thy beard!" And, calling the dogs, she set them on the wretched man, who tried to flee; but his foot caught in his robe and he fell, uttering lamentable cries, too weak to drive off the enemies that were tearing him.

His shrieks aroused Abdallah. To rush to the Jew, punish the dogs, and threaten the slave was the work of an instant. He picked up the Jew, took him in his arms, and carried him into the tent; a moment after he was washing his feet and hands, and binding up his wounds, while Halima brought him dates and milk.

"I bless, thee, my son," said the old man, in tears. "The blessing of the meanest of mankind is never contemptible in the sight of the Lord. May God remove far from thee jealousy, sadness, and pride, and grant thee wisdom, patience and peace, the gifts that he has promised to the generous of heart, like thee!"

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At evening Hafiz, Abdallah, and the Jew talked long together round their frugal repast, although the cripple could not conceal his repugnance to the son of Israel. Abdallah, on the contrary, listened to the old man with interest, for the stranger was a great traveler, and told them of his journeyings. He was acquainted with Muscat, Hindostan and Persia; he had visited the country of the Franks and crossed the deserts of Africa; he had now come from Egypt through Soudan, and was returning to Jerusalem by the way of Syria.

"But the object of my search is not wealth, my dear host," said the Jew; "more than once have I seen it on the roadside and passed it by. Poverty befits the children of Abraham, say our sages, as do scarlet trappings the snow-white steed. What I have pursued for half a century over deserts and seas, through fatigue and misery, is the Word of God, the sacred tradition. That unwritten word, which God gave to Moses on Mount Sinai, was confided by Moses to the keeping of Joshua; Joshua transmitted it to the seventy elders, the elders to the prophets, and the prophets to the synagogue. After the destruction of Jerusalem our masters collected it in the Talmud, but how far were they from possessing it entire! To punish the sins of our fathers, God broke asunder the truth, and scattered the fragments to the four winds of the heaven. Happy is he who can gather together these dispersed shreds—happy is he who can discover a ray of the divine splendor! The children of the age may despise and hate him; their insults are to his soul like the rain to the earth; in bursting it asunder, they purify and refresh it."

"And are you this man, my father?" said Abdallah, so deeply moved by the words of his guest that he quite forgot that he was talking with an infidel. "Have

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you discovered this treasure? Do you possess the whole truth?"

"I am but a worm of the earth," replied the Jew; "but from my childhood up I have questioned the masters, and entreated them to repeat to me the secrets of the law; I have sought in the Cabala for the wealth that is thought valueless in the marts of the world, and I have endeavored to decipher that language of numbers which is the key to all truth. How far I have succeeded God alone can judge; to Him be the praise! One thing is certain, namely, that the angel Razriel initiated Adam into the mysteries of the creation; and who dare say that this revelation is lost? If there lives a man who has lifted a corner of the veil, he has nothing more to hope or fear on earth; he has had his day, and is ready for death."

"My father," asked the young Bedouin, trembling, "has your science told you of a sacred plant which at once bestows virtue and happiness?"

"Certainly," replied the old man, smiling; "it is treated of in the Zohar, with many marvels."

"It is the four-leaved shamrock, is it not?"

"Perchance," returned the Jew, with a frown; "but how did this name reach your ears?"

When the son of Yusuf had finished his story, the old man gazed at him tenderly. "My son," said he, "the poor often repay hospitality better than the rich, for God himself holds the purse-strings. The secret which thou art seeking I long ago discovered in the recesses of Persia; and, since God has led my steps to thy tent, it is doubtless because He has chosen me to bring thee the truth. Listen, therefore, and let what I am about to tell thee be engraven on thy heart."

Hafiz and Abdallah drew near the old man, who related the following tale in a low and mysterious voice:

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"You know that when God drove our first father Adam from Paradise, He permitted him to carry with him upon earth the date-tree to serve as his nourishment, and the camel, which was moulded of the same clay as himself, and which could not exist without him."

"That is true," exclaimed the cripple. "When my young camels come into the world, they would die of hunger if I did not hold their heads to their mother's udders; the camel is made for us as we are for the camel."

"When the flaming sword drove the first criminals before it, Adam cast a look of despair at the abode which he was forced to forsake, and, to carry with him a last memento, broke off a branch of myrtle. The angel let him alone; he remembered that by God's command he had formerly worshipped the mortal whom now he pitied."

"True!" said Hafiz. "It was the same branch of myrtle that Shoaib long after gave to his son-in-law Moses; it was the staff with which the prophet tended his flocks, and with which he afterward wrought his miracles in Egypt."

"Eve also paused in tears before those flowers and trees which she had loved so well; but the sword was pitiless, and she was forced to proceed. Just as she was about to go out, she hastily snatched one of the plants of Paradise. The angel shut his eyes, as he had done with Adam. What the plant was Eve knew not; she had clutched it in her flight, and had instantly closed her hand. She would have been wise had she carried it away in the same manner; but curiosity once more prevailed over prudence, and, before crossing the fatal threshold, our mother opened her hand to see what she had gathered. It was the four-leaved shamrock, the most brilliant of all the flowers of Para-

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dise. One leaf was red like copper, another white like silver, the third yellow like gold, and the fourth glittering like diamond. Eve paused to look at her treasure, when the fiery sword touched her; she started, her hand trembling, and the diamond leaf fell within the gates of Paradise, while the other three leaves, swept away by the wind, were scattered over the earth; where they fell God only knows."

"What!" exclaimed the young man, "have they never since been seen?"

"Not that I know of; and it is even possible that the story is only an allegory, concealing some profound truth."

"No, no," said Abdallah, "that is not so. Try to remember, my father; perchance you will recall something more. I must have this plant at any price; I wish it, and, with God's aid, I will have it."

The old man buried his face in his hands, and long remained absorbed in contemplation. Abdallah and Hafiz scarcely dared breathe for fear of disturbing his reverie. "My efforts are in vain; I can recall nothing to memory," said he, at last; "perhaps my book will give me some information." He took from his girdle a yellow manuscript volume, with a black, greasy cover, turned the pages slowly, carefully examined the squares, circles, and alphabets mixed with figures, beginning some with aleph and others with thau, the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet. "Here are four lines which are repeated in Soudan, and which may interest you," said he, at last; "but their meaning escapes me:

"There is a mysterious herb
That grows hidden from human eyes;
Seek it not upon earth,
'Twill be found above in the skies."

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"Patience, patience," he added, seeing Abdallah's emotion; "the words have more than one meaning; the ignorant seek to fish up the truth from the surface, the wise pursue it to the remotest depths, where they attain it, thanks to the most powerful of instruments, the sacred decade of the Sephiroth. Do you not remember the saying of one of our masters, the Rabbi Halaptha, the son of Dozza?

'Seek not heaven in yonder azure depths,
Where glows the burning sun and pales the moon;
For heaven, my son, lies hid in thine own soul,
And Paradise is naught but a pure heart.'

Yes," he continued, raising his voice, "I discern a light that guides me. Since God has permitted us to meet, He has doubtless decreed that you shall find what you desire; but beware of outstripping His will by a vain and guilty curiosity. Follow His law, execute His commands, create a heaven in your soul, and some day, perchance, when you least expect it, you will find the desired reward. This, at least, is all that my science can tell you."

"Well spoken, old man," said Hafiz, laying his hand on Abdallah's shoulder. "Nephew," he added, "God is master of the hour; wait and obey."

CHAPTER IX

THE WELL OF ZOBHEYDE

The night was a sweet one to Abdallah. He saw the mysterious plant more than once in his dreams, and, as soon as he awakened, he sought to retain the friend

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who had given him hope, but the Jew obstinately refused his entreaty.

"No, my son," said he, "one night in thy tent is enough. The first day a man is a guest, the second a burden, the third a pest. Thou hast nothing more to tell me, and I have nothing more to teach thee; it is time for us to part. Let me thank thee once more, and pray God in thy behalf. If we have no longer the same keblah,¹ at least we are both the children of Abraham, and both worship the same God."

The only favor that Abdallah could obtain was for the Jew to mount a camel, and permit his two friends to accompany him a day's journey on his way. Hafiz had taken a fancy to the stranger, and Abdallah hoped to gain some new light on the subject nearest his heart; but the sight of the desert awakened new ideas in the old man's mind, and he thought no more of the stories of the past night.

"If I am not mistaken," said he to Hafiz, "we shall find on our way the well dug in olden times by the Sultan Zobeyde in his pilgrimage to Mecca."

"Yes," replied the cripple, "it is Haroun Al-Raschid's monument in our country. To the calif and his pious wife we owe our finest gardens."

"A glorious monument," exclaimed the Jew; "and one that will endure when what men call glory, that is, blood uselessly shed and money foolishly spent, shall be forgotten."

"Spoken like one of the children of Israel," rejoined Hafiz. "You are a shop-keeping people. A Bedouin reasons in a different fashion. War to him is the best thing of all that earth affords. He who has not looked death in the face knows not whether he is a man. It

¹ The point of the horizon toward which men turn their faces in prayer; the Mohammedans turn toward Mecca, the Jews toward Jerusalem.

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is noble to strike with the front to the foe; it is glorious to overthrow an enemy and avenge those we love. Are you not of the same mind, my nephew?"

"You are right, my uncle; but battle is not pleasure without alloy. I remember the time when, closely pressed by a Bedouin who held a pistol to my head, I plunged my sword into his breast. He fell; my joy was extreme, but it was of short duration. As I looked on his dim eyes, and his lips covered with the foam of death, I thought, in spite of myself, that he had a mother who, however proud she might be of having given birth to a brave man, must henceforth remain lonely and desolate, as my mother would have been had her son been killed instead. And this man was a Mussulman—that is, a brother! Perhaps you are right," added the young man, turning to the Jew. "War doubtless is noble; but to fight the desert, like the calif, and force the wilderness to give way before fertility and abundance—that is great, indeed! Happy they who lived in the days of Zobeyde the Good!"

"Why not imitate those you admire?" asked the old man in a low tone, as if wishing to be heard by Abdallah alone.

"Explain yourself," said the Bedouin; "I do not understand you."

"Nor I," said the cripple.

"It is because the eyes of youth are not yet open, and those of old age are blinded by habit. Why is this clump of acacias in this spot, when all around is barren? Why do these sheep browse on grass which is almost green here when the sands of the desert have dominion everywhere else? Why do these birds flutter in and out among the sheep, and pick up the still sprouting earth with their beaks? You see this daily, and because you see it daily you do not reflect on it.

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Men are made thus. They would admire the sun did it not return every morning."

"You are right," said Abdallah, thoughtfully; "there is water in this spot; perhaps one of the wells formerly dug by the calif."

"How can you be certain?" asked Hafiz.

"You would not ask the question," returned the Jew, "if, like me, you had grown old on the Talmud. Harken to the words of one of our masters, and know that all knowledge is contained in our law. 'The words of the law before the coming of Solomon were like unto a well, whose cool water lies far below the surface of the earth, so that none can drink thereof. Seeing this, the wise man fastens one rope to another and one thread to another, then draws and drinks. It was thus that Solomon passed from allegory to allegory, and from speech to speech, till he had fathomed the words of the law.'"

"Whoever finds this spring will find a treasure," said the shepherd. "Stay with us, stranger, and we will seek it together; you shall aid us with your science, and we will share with you."

"No," replied the Jew. "He who weds Science weds poverty. I have lived too happily for half a century with Study to be divorced from her now. Wealth is an imperious mistress; she requires the whole heart and life of man. Leave her to the young."

The sun was going down on the horizon. The old man dismounted from his camel and thanked his two companions, whom he tenderly embraced, insisting that they should go no further. "Be not concerned about me," he said; "he has nothing to fear who has poverty for his baggage, old age for his escort, and God for his companion." And, waving his hand for the last time, he resolutely plunged into the desert.

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CHAPTER X

THE COPPER LEAF

It was not a difficult matter to purchase the spot of ground where the piercing eye of the pilgrim had divined a spring; a few feddans¹ of half-barren sand are of little value in the desert, and twenty dourous that Halima had formerly received from Mansour, and had kept carefully in an old vase, sufficed to crown Abdallah's wishes. Hafiz, who was always prudent, gave out that he intended to build there a shelter for his flock, and immediately set to work to bring sufficient boughs thither to conceal from all eyes the mysterious work about to be undertaken.

Wherever there are women and children there are curiosity and gossip. It was soon a common rumor among the tribe that Hafiz and his nephew passed the nights in digging for treasure; and when, at nightfall, as the shepherds led their flocks to water, they spied the two friends covered with sand, they did not spare their taunts and jeers. "What is that?" they asked; "jackals hiding in their den, dervishes hollowing out their cell, or old men building their tomb?" "No," was the answer; "magicians digging a path to the bottomless pit." "Let them be patient," cried others; "they will find their way there only too soon." And the laughter and ridicule went on; no bit has yet been found to curb the mouth of the envious and ignorant.

Abdallah and his uncle continued to dig with ardor for more than a month, with but little progress; the sand caved in, and the night destroyed the labor of the day. Halima was the first to lose patience. She

¹ The feddan is a little less than our acre.

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accused her brother of having yielded too easily to the folly of a child. By degrees Hafiz grew discouraged, acknowledged the justice of his sister's reproaches, and abandoned the undertaking. "God has punished me for my weakness," said he. "It was a great mistake to listen to the wretched impostor, who amused himself with our credulity. Could anything else have been expected from those eternal foes of the Prophet and the truth?"

Abdallah, left alone, did not suffer himself to be cast down by misfortune. "God is my witness," he repeated, "that I am laboring for my people, and not for myself alone. If I fail, what matters my pains? If I succeed, what matters the time?" He passed another whole month in propping up the inside of the well with wood, and, having secured his work, began to dig anew.

On the fifteenth day of the third month Hafiz, urged by Halima, determined to make a last effort with that headstrong nephew, who continued to cherish a foolish hope after his uncle had set him the example of wisdom and resignation. To preach to Abdallah was not an easy task; the well was already thirty cubits deep, and the workman was at the bottom. Hafiz threw himself on the ground, and, putting his mouth to the edge of the hole, shouted, "You headstrong child, more stubborn than a mule, have you sworn to bury yourself in this accursed well?"

"Since you are there, uncle," answered Abdallah, in a voice which seemed to come from the bottomless pit, "will you be kind enough to draw up the pannier and empty it, to save time?"

"Unhappy boy!" cried Hafiz, in a tone more of anger than pity, "have you forgotten the lessons which I gave you in your childhood? Have you so little respect for your mother and me that you persist in af-

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flicting us? Have you forgotten the beautiful saying of the Koran, 'Whoso is preserved from the covetousness of his own soul, he shall surely prosper?' Do you think——"

"Father! father!" cried Abdallah; "I feel moisture; the water is coming; I hear it. Help! draw up the panner, or I am lost!"

Hafiz sprang to the rope, and well it was for him that he did so, for, despite all his haste, he brought up his nephew covered with mud, senseless, and half drowned. The water was rushing and boiling up in the well. Abdallah soon came to himself, and listened with delight to the rushing of the water; his heart beat violently, and Hafiz's eyes filled with tears. Suddenly the noise ceased. Hafiz lighted a handful of dry grass and threw it into the well, and, less than ten paces from the surface, he saw the water, smooth and glittering as steel. To lower a jug and draw it up again was the work of an instant. The water was sweet. Abdallah fell on his knees and bowed his head to the earth. His uncle followed his example, then rose, embraced his nephew, and entreated his pardon.

Within an hour, despite the heat of the day, the two Bedouins had fixed a windlass by the side of the spring, furnished with earthen buckets and turned by two oxen, and the groaning sakiah poured the water upon the yellow grass, and restored to the earth the freshness of spring.

At nightfall, instead of going to the watering-place, the shepherds stopped with their flocks at the spring, and the scoffers of the night before glorified Abdallah. "We foresaw it," said the elders. "Happy the mother of such a son!" exclaimed the matrons. "Happy the wife of such a brave and handsome youth!" thought the maidens. And all added, "Blessed be the servant of God and his children's children."

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When the tribe was assembled together, the son of Yusuf filled a jug with water as cool as that of the well of Zemzem,¹ and, resting it on his arm, offered it first to his mother, and then to each of the others in turn. He himself was the last to drink. As he lifted the vessel to drain it to the bottom, he felt something cold strike his lips. It was a bit of metal that had been swept along by the spring.

"What is this, my uncle?" he asked of Hafiz. "Does copper thus lie hidden in the bowels of the earth?"

"Oh, my son, preserve it; it is the choicest of treasures," cried the old man. "God has sent you the reward of your courage and labor. Do you not see that it is a shamrock leaf? The earth itself has opened to bring you from its depths this flower of Paradise. All that the honest son of Israel told us is true. Hope, my child, hope! Praise God the Only, the Incomparable, and the All-powerful! He alone is great!"

CHAPTER XI.

THE GARDENS OF IREM.

Verdant gardens watered by living springs, branches laden with fruit, palm-trees, pomegranates, eternal shade—such is the paradise which the Book of Truth promises the faithful. Abdallah received a foretaste of this paradise on earth. His garden in a few years was the most beautiful spot imaginable—a shady and peaceful retreat, the delight of the eye and the heart. White clematis twined round the acacias and olive-trees, hedges of myrtle surrounded the dourah; bar-

¹ A sacred well within the walls of the temple at Mecca; the same, according to tradition, which gushed forth in the desert at the command of the angel to quench the thirst of Hagar and Ishmael.

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ley, and melon-beds with perpetual verdure, and the cool water, flowing through numerous trenches, bathed the foot of the young orange-trees. Grapes, bananas, apricots, and pomegranates abounded in their season, and flowers blossomed all the year round. In this happy abode, where sadness never came, the rose, the jasmine, the mint, the gray-eyed narcissus, and the wormwood with its azure blossoms, seemed to smile on the passer-by, and delighted him with their gentle fragrance when his eye was weary of admiring their beauty. What thicket escapes the piercing eye of the bird? These friends of the fruits and flowers hastened thither from every quarter of the horizon. One would have said that they knew the hand that fed them. In the morning, when Abdallah quitted his tent to spread the carpet of prayer on the dew-bespangled grass, the sparrows welcomed him with joyful cries, the turtle-doves cooed more tenderly than ever from under the broad fig-leaves, the bees alighted on his head, and the butterflies fluttered around him; flowers, birds, humming insects, and murmuring waters, all things living seemed to render him thanks, all lifted up Abdallah's soul toward Him who had given him peace and plenty.

It was not for himself that the son of Yusuf had desired the wealth which he shared with his friends. He dug a deep basin at the bottom of the garden, into which the water flowed and remained cool during the summer droughts. The birds, fluttering about it, attracted the caravans from afar. "What water is that?" said the camel-drivers. "During all the years that we have traveled over the desert we have never seen this cistern. Have we mistaken our road? We filled our skins for seven days, and here we find water on the third day's march. Are these the gardens of

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Irem¹ which we are permitted to behold? Has God forgiven the presumptuous monarch who undertook to create a paradise in the midst of the desert?"

"No," answered Halima; "these are not the gardens of Irem. What you behold is the work of labor and prayer. God has blessed my son Abdallah." And the well was called the Well of the Benediction.

CHAPTER XII

THE TWO BROTHERS

Three things are the delight of the eye, says the proverb—running water, verdure, and beauty. Halima felt what was lacking in this well-watered and verdant garden. Again and again she repeated to her son that a man should not suffer his father's name to perish, but Abdallah turned a deaf ear to her. He had no thought of marriage; his mind was elsewhere. He looked continually at the tiny copper leaf, and continually asked himself by what deed of valor or goodness he could please God and obtain the only boon that he desired. Man's heart has not room for two passions at the same time.

One evening, when old Hafiz had visited his sister, and was using all his eloquence to persuade this wild colt to submit to the bridle, a gun fired at a distance announced the arrival of a caravan. Abdallah rose instantly to meet the strangers, leaving Halima in despair and poor Hafiz confounded. He soon returned,

¹ Sheddad, the King of Ad, having heard of Paradise and its delights, undertook to build a palace and garden which should rival it in magnificence. A terrible voice from heaven destroyed this monument of pride, or, rather, rendered it invisible, for a certain Ibn Kelabah pretended to have seen it during the reign of the Calif Moyawiah. The gardens of Irem are as celebrated among the Arabs as the Tower of Babel among the Hebrews.

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bringing with him a man still in his youth, but already fat and corpulent. The stranger bowed to Hafiz and Halima, gazed at them earnestly, then, fixing his small eyes on the Bedouin, "Is not this the tribe of the Beni Amurs?" he asked. "And am I not in the tent of Abdallah, the son of Yusuf?"

"It is Abdallah that has the honor of welcoming you," answered the young man; "all that is here belongs to your lordship."

"What!" cried the new-comer, "have ten years' absence so changed me that I am a stranger in this dwelling? Has Abdallah forgotten his brother? Has my mother but one son?"

The meeting was a joyful one after so long a separation. Abdallah embraced Omar again and again, and Halima kissed first one and then the other, while Hafiz whispered to himself that man is a wicked animal. To suspect the son of Mansour of ingratitude was a crime, but how often had this crime been committed by the old shepherd!

The repast finished and the pipes brought, Omar took up the conversation. "How delighted I am to see you," said he, tenderly clasping his brother's hand, "and the more so that I come to do you a service."

"Speak, brother," said the son of Yusuf. "Having nothing to hope or fear except from God, I know not what service you can render me; but danger often draws near us without our knowledge, and nothing is quicker than the eye of a friend."

"It is not danger, but fortune, that is in question," returned the son of Mansour. "Behold what brought me hither. I come from Taif, whither I had been summoned by the grand sherif. 'Omar,' said he to me, 'I know you to be the richest and most prudent merchant of Djiddah; you are known throughout the desert, where there is not a tribe that does not re-

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spect your name, or is not ready, at the sight of your signet, to furnish camels to transport your merchandise, or brave men to defend it. For this reason I have conceived a high esteem for you, and it is to give you a proof of it that I have summoned you hither.'

"I bowed respectfully and awaited the pleasure of the sherif, who stroked his beard a long time before proceeding. 'The Pacha of Egypt,' said he at last, in a hesitating manner—'the Pacha of Egypt, who prizes my friendship as I prize his, has sent me a slave who will be the gem of my harem, and whom, through respect for the hand that chose her, I can receive only as a wife. The pacha does me an honor, which I accept with gratitude, though I am old, and at my age, having already a wife, whom I love, it would have been wiser not to risk the peace of my household. But this slave has not yet arrived, and it is to conduct her hither that I need your prudence and skill. She cannot land in Djiddah, which is under Turkish rule, and must therefore go to Yambo, in my dominions. The way is long from Yambo to Taif, and the wandering hordes and haughty tribes of the desert do not always respect my name. It does not suit me to make war on them at present, neither is it fitting that I should expose myself to insult. I am in need, therefore, of a wise and sagacious man to go to Yambo for me, as if on his own behalf. You can easily make the journey, and no one will be surprised at it. What is more natural than that you should go to meet a valuable cargo, and who would attack you, a simple merchant, in a country where you have so many friends and resources?"

"Thus spoke the sherif. I sought to decline the dangerous favor, but was met with a terrible look. The displeasure of a prince is like the roar of a lion;

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to incense him is to rush into his jaws. I resigned myself to what I could not help. 'Commander of the Faithful,' I replied, 'it is true that God has blessed my efforts, and that I have a few friends in the desert. It is for thee to command; speak, and I obey.'

"That is well," said Abdallah; "there is peril to brave and glory to win."

"It is for this reason that I have come to thee," resumed the son of Mansour. "With whom should I share this noble enterprise if not with thee, my brother, the bravest of the brave—if not with the wise and prudent Hafiz—if not with the bold comrades? The Bedouins on the road have never seen me—they only know my name; and, besides, instead of defending my caravan, they might plunder it, as they have done more than once; but if thou art there with thy followers, they will think twice before attacking it. To thee, therefore, it belongs to conduct the affair—to thee will revert all the honor thereof. Thou seest that I speak with perfect frankness. As for me, I am only a merchant; thou art a man of thought and action. It is said in the desert that I am rich and fond of money—a reputation which is a peril rather than an aid; thou, on the contrary, art respected and dreaded. The name of the son of Yusuf is a power—his presence is worth an army. Without thee I can do nothing; with thee I am sure of succeeding in an adventure in which my head is at stake. Am I wrong in relying on thee?"

"No," said Abdallah; "we are links of one chain; woe to him who breaks it! We will set out to-morrow, and, happen what may, thou shalt find me by thy side. A brother is born for evil days."

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CHAPTER XIII

THE CARAVAN

The same evening everything was in readiness for departure—the skins filled, the provisions prepared, the bundles of hay counted, and the harness examined. Abdallah chose the surest camels and the most experienced drivers. Nor was this all; he engaged twelve young men, brave companions, of tried courage, who laughed at fatigue and war. Who would not have been proud of following the son of Yusuf? His glance commanded respect, his words went to the heart. With saber always drawn and hand always open, he was the boldest of leaders and the tenderest of friends. Beside him men were as tranquil as the hawk in the cloud or death in the tomb. On his part, Hafiz passed a sleepless night. To clean the guns, try the powder, run the bullets and sharpen the sabers and daggers, was work to his taste, a pleasure that he yielded to no one.

As soon as the stars began to pale the caravan set out on its way, with Abdallah at the head by the side of Omar, and Hafiz in the rear, watching everything, and throwing out timely words of fault-finding or praise. The camels walked slowly in single file, accompanied by their leaders chanting songs of the desert. In the midst of the band proudly marched a magnificent dromedary, with a slender head, of the Oman breed, covered with gold, silver and shining plumes, and bearing a litter hung with velvet and brocade, the equipage of the new favorite. The silver-pommeled saddles, Damascus blades, and black bur-nous embroidered with gold, of twelve riders mounted on fine horses, glittered in the first beams of the sun.

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Next came Abdallah's mare, led by a servant. Nothing could be imagined more beautiful than this mare, the glory of the tribe, and the despair and envy of all the Bedouins; she was called Hamama, the Dove, because she was as snowy, gentle and fleet as this queen of the forests.

Abdallah, dressed like a simple camel-driver, and armed with a long iron-headed staff, walked on foot by the side of Omar, who was seated tranquilly on his mule. They were among friends, and had nothing to fear, so that the brothers could talk at length of the past. When the sun darted its vertical rays on their heads, and the scorching air enervated man and beast, the son of Yusuf took his place by the side of the first camel-driver, and, in a grave and solemn voice, chanted one of those hymns of the desert which beguile the lonely way, to the praise of God.

God alone is great!

Who maketh the earth to tremble?

Who launcheth the thunderbolt through the burning
air?

Who giveth the sands to the fury of the simoon?

Who causeth the torrent to gush forth from its arid
bed?

His name? hearest thou it not in the whirlwind?

God alone is great!

God alone is great!

Who calleth the storm from the depths of the sea?

Who causeth the rain and clouds to give way before
the sun?

Who forceth the hungry wave to lick the strand?

His name? the wind murmureth it in its flight to the
dying wave.

God alone is great!

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Oh, the power of the divine name! At the sound of these praises the very brutes forgot their fatigue and marched with a firm tread; the camel-drivers raised their heads; all refreshed themselves with these words as a running brook. It is the strength of the soul that gives energy to the body, and for the soul there is no strength but in God.

Thus passed the first day. The next day some precautions were taken; Hafiz went in advance as a scout; they set out as soon as the moon had risen, marched in silence, and stopped earlier than the day before, but saw no one. The succeeding days also passed quietly, and on the evening of the ninth day's march they saw at last the walls and towers of Yambo.

CHAPTER XIV

CAFOUR

The caravan made a short stay in the city; the brig that brought the slave had arrived the night before, and Omar was in haste to return in peace to Djiddah. The camels rested, they took the way to the desert.

They received the sultana at the water's edge. A flat boat put off from the ship with two women wrapped in habarahs, or large mantels of black taffeta, and their faces shrouded, all but the eyes, in bourkos, or white muslin veils that fell to the feet. Omar received the strangers with a respectful bow, and led them to the equipage that awaited them. The dromedary knelt down at the voice of Abdallah. One of the women slowly mounted the palanquin and seated herself, gracefully drawing the folds of her robe about her; the other approached with equal gravity, but, suddenly snatching off her mantle and veil, she threw them

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over Omar's head, twisting the muslin around his face, and almost smothering him; then, putting one foot on the camel's neck, she leaped on his back like a cat, grimacing like an ape at the astonished Bedouins, and shouting with laughter.

"Cafour, you shall be whipped," cried the veiled lady, who had much ado to preserve her gravity; but Cafour did not believe her mistress's threats, and continued to laugh and grimace at Omar as soon as his head emerged from the coverings. The son of Mansour at last threw off the heap of silk under which he had been buried, and raised his head angrily toward the creature that had insulted him; but what was his astonishment to see a smile on the faces of the grave Bedouins and Abdallah himself. All shrugged their shoulders as they pointed to his enemy. He looked, and saw a little negro girl of surpassing ugliness. A round, flat face, with small eyes, the whites of which were scarcely visible, a flat nose sunken below the cheeks, wide nostrils, from which hung a silver ring that fell below the mouth, enormous lips, teeth as white as those of a young dog, and a chin tattooed blue—such was the charming face of the damsel. To add to her ugliness, she was loaded with jewels like an idol. On the crown of her head was a plume of parrot's feathers. The thick wool that covered her head was parted in little tresses ornamented with sequins; her ears were pierced like a sieve, and hung with rings of every shape and size; a broad necklace of blue enamel encircled her neck, and her arm was covered from the wrist to the elbow with seven or eight bracelets of coral, amber, and filigree work; lastly, she wore on each ankle a prodigious silver band. Such was Cafour, the delight of her mistress, the beautiful Leila.

Full license is given fools, the favorites of God, whose soul is in heaven while their body drags on the

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earth. The whole caravan, therefore, except Omar, who still bore her a grudge, took a liking to the poor negress. It was but too evident that she had not her reason; she talked and laughed continually; her tongue spared nobody, and her judgments were insane. For instance, she gazed long at the son of Mansour, who, half reclining on his mule, marched by the side of the litter, surrounded by his slaves, slowly smoking Persian tobacco in his jasmine pipe. One of the servants having filled the pipe too full, he dealt him a box on the ear. "Mistress," cried Cafour, "do you see that old man buried in a cushion, with his feet in slippers? He is a Jew, mistress; beware of him; he would beat us for a douro, and sell us for a sequin." Leila laughed, while Omar flew into a passion and threatened the negress. To style a man who counted his piastres by millions an old man and a Jew was indeed the act of an idiot. What person in his right mind would have dared to talk thus? It was soon the turn of Abdallah, who was reviewing the caravan. He had put on his war-dress, and everyone admired the grace of the young chief. His white bournous floated in long folds; his Damascus pistols and silver-hilted cangiar glittered in his belt; and a red and yellow silk turban overshadowed his eyes, and added to the fierceness of his glance. How beautiful he was! All hearts went out toward him, and his very mare seemed proud of carrying such a master. Hamama tossed her serpentine head and reed-like ears; her dilated nostrils breathed forth fire; on seeing her start, vault, stop short, and bound forward, it seemed as if she and her rider were but one. As the son of Yusuf paused near the litter, a camel-driver could not help saying to Cafour, "Look, child; do you see such beauty among your coarse Egyptians or in your Maghreb?"

"Look, mistress," cried the negress, leaning over the

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camel's neck; "see these fine clothes, elegant air, tapering fingers, and cast-down eyes! Pretty bird, why don't you look at us?" said she to Abdallah. "Oh, I know; it is a woman in disguise—the virgin of the tribe. Driver, tell him to come up here; he belongs here with us."

"Silence, infidel!" exclaimed Abdallah, losing his patience. "Must you have a ring through your lips to stop your serpent's tongue?"

"It is a woman," cried Cafour, laughing loudly; "a man does not avenge himself by insults. Come, women are made to love each other. You are handsome, and so am I, but my mistress is the handsomest of the three. Look."

The eye is quicker than the thought. Abdallah raised his eyes to the litter. Cafour playfully laid hold of her mistress's veil, the frightened Leila drew back, the string broke, and the bourko fell. Leila uttered a cry and covered her face with one hand, while with the other she boxed the ears of the negress, who began to cry. The whole passed like a flash of lightning.

"How beautiful she is!" thought the son of Mansour. "I must have her."

"Glory to him who created her, and created her so perfect!" murmured the son of Yusuf.

Who can tell the pain and pleasure that a moment can contain? Who can tell how this fleeting vision entered and filled Abdallah's soul? The caravan went on, but the Bedouin remained motionless. Leila had hidden herself in her veil, yet a woman stood smiling before the son of Yusuf. He closed his eyes, yet, despite himself, he saw a brow as white as ivory, cheeks as blooming as the tulip, and tresses blacker than ebony falling on a gazelle-like neck, like the date branch laden with golden fruit. A pair of lips like a thread of scarlet parted to call him; a pair of large eyes

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gazed at him—eyes surrounded by a bluish ring, and sparkling with a luster softer than that of the violet moist with dew. Abdallah felt his heart escaping him; he buried his face in his hands and burst into tears.

The caravan continued its march, and old Hafiz, who brought up the rear, soon found himself by the side of his nephew. Astonished at the silence and inaction of the young chief, he approached him, and, touching his arm, "Something new has happened, has there not?" he asked.

Abdallah started, and, recovering himself like a man aroused from a dream, "Yes, my father," he answered, in a dejected tone.

"The enemy is at hand!" cried Hafiz, with sparkling eyes; "you have seen him! Glory to God, our guns are about to speak!"

"No one threatens us; the danger is not there."

"What is the matter then, my son?" said the old man, anxiously. "Are you sick? have you a fever? You know that I am skilled in the art of healing."

"That is not it; at our first halt I will tell you all."

"You frighten me," said Hafiz; "if it is neither danger nor sickness that disturbs you, some evil passion must be troubling your soul! Take care, my son; with God's aid the foe is defeated, and with God's aid sickness is cured: there is but one enemy against which there is no defence, and that enemy is our own heart."

CHAPTER XV.

THE SULTAN OF CANDAHAR.

When the caravan halted, Abdallah took his uncle aside. Hafiz seated himself on his carpet and began to smoke, without uttering a word. The young chief,

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wrapped in his cloak, stretched himself on the ground, and long remained motionless. Suddenly starting up, and, kissing the old man's hand, "My uncle," said he, "I implore the protection of God. What God wills must come; there is no strength nor power but in him." And, in an agitated voice, he related the vision which had troubled him.

"Oh, my son," said the shepherd, with a sigh, "thou art punished for not harkening to our words. Happy is he who chooses a virtuous and obedient wife from among his tribe, with the sole desire of perpetuating the name of his father. Woe to him who suffers his soul to be taken in the snares of a strange woman! Can anything good come out of Egypt? All the women there, since Joseph's time, have been dissolute and treacherous, worthy daughters of Zuleika!"¹

"Treachery had nothing to do with it, my uncle; it was wholly the work of chance."

"Do not believe it, my nephew; there is no such thing as chance with these cunning fishers for men's hearts, who spread their nets everywhere."

"She loves me, then!" exclaimed the youth, starting up; "but no, my uncle, you are mistaken. In two days we shall be at Taif; in two days we shall be separated forever, yet I feel that I shall always love her!"

"Yes; you will love her; but she will forget you for the first jewel from the hand of her new master. Your heart serves her as a plaything; when the whim of the moment has passed, she will break it without remorse. Have you forgotten what the Koran says of that imperfect and capricious being who is brought up among ornaments and jewels? 'The reason of women is folly, and their religion love. Like the flowers, they are the delight of the eyes and the joy of the senses,

¹ The name given by the Arabs to Potiphar's wife.

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but they are poisoned blossoms; woe to him who draws near them; he will soon have a winding-sheet for his raiment!' Believe in my experience; I have seen more families destroyed by women than by war. The more generous a man is, the greater is his danger. Do you not know the story of the Sultan of Candahar, who was a true believer, though he lived in the days of ignorance before the coming of Mohammed, and a sage, though he sat on a throne? He undertook to gather together all the maxims of human prudence, in order to leave to his children an inheritance worthy of him. With this end, the philosophers of the Indies had written a library, which the Sultan took with him everywhere, and which ten camels scarce sufficed to carry. 'Reduce all this science to first principles,' said he. It was done, and but a camel's load remained. This was still too much. A number of aged Brahmins, chosen by the king, reduced this abridgment of long experience first to ten volumes, then to five, and then to a single one, which was offered to the Sultan in a box of velvet and gold. The prince had reigned long, and life had few secrets from him. He took the book and began to blot out all that was self-evident and, therefore, unnecessary. 'What is the danger that threatens my sons?' thought he; 'not avarice, for that is the malady of the old; nor ambition, for that is the virtue of princes. I will strike out all this.' But at last he came to a more violent passion. He was so forcibly struck by the truth of an adage, that he threw the book into the fire, and bequeathed this maxim alone to his children, calling it the key to the treasure of life: 'All women are false—above all, the one that loves thee!' Such was the adage. Wouldst thou, my son, be more prudent than this infidel, more enlightened than Solomon, or wiser than the Prophet? No; believe me, the beauty of woman is like the scabbard

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of the sabre—a glittering covering that hides death. Do not go to meet thy destruction. Think of God, preserve thyself for thy old and true friends, and, if more is needed to move thee, have pity on thy mother and old Hafiz."

"Thou art right," said Abdallah, sadly, as he stretched himself on the ground, with his bournous for a pillow. For the first time he did not believe his uncle's word; for the first time, too, the four-leaved shamrock was forgotten.

CHAPTER XVI

THE ATTACK

Night is an antidote to fatigue and a poison to sorrow. The son of Yusuf rose with a mind more diseased than the night before. Struck with incurable madness, he no longer felt himself the master of his will or his movements; it was the delirium of fever, the dejection of despair. Despite himself, the fatal litter attracted him; he hastened to it, then turned and fled, pursued by those terrible yet charming eyes. If he saw from afar a horseman approaching the palanquin—if the son of Mansour turned toward the two women, he spurred on his horse as if about to attack an enemy, then suddenly paused, daring neither to draw back nor advance. The whole morning he tortured his horse. Panting and covered with foam, Hammama bounded forward under the spur which tore her sides, astonished at not understanding her master and sharing his madness.

The shepherd cast withering glances toward the litter. Leila had thrown herself back in the corner, and covered her head with her veil, and no one was to be seen

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but Cafour, spiritless and mute as a wet bird. More tranquil in this respect, Hafiz turned to look for his nephew, and saw him wandering at random in the desert. Everything around him betrayed a diseased mind. Hafiz spurred his horse toward Abdallah. "Cheer up, my nephew!" he cried. "Courage! We are men in order to suffer; we are Mussulmen in order to submit to fate."

"I am stifling," answered the youth; "I am conquered by the malady that is preying upon me. Anything—anything, my uncle, rather than what I suffer! Let danger come—let the enemy draw near; I wish to fight and to die!"

"Mad wishes and guilty words," replied the old man, sternly. "God is the master of life and death. Beware lest He grant thy prayer; it is sufficient punishment that God should give us what we ask him in our folly. What is that?" he added, leaping from his horse, and carefully examining the ground. "These are the prints of horses' feet; there are no camels among them. An armed band has passed this way. The marks are fresh; the enemy is not far off. Do you not feel that your passion is destroying us? You, our leader, have noticed nothing; you are leading us to death."

The two companions looked about them, but saw nothing but the desert. They were passing through a desolate country. The road wound among prodigious blocks of reddish granite, strewn over the sands like crumbling ruins. The earth was full of gaping crevices, the beds of dried-up torrents and deep caves—graves opened for the traveler. There was not a bird in the air, not a gazelle in the distance, not a black speck in the horizon; with a steel-like sky above their heads, and the silence of death around them, at-

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tacked there, their only hope was in their sabres and God.

Hafiz ran to the head of the caravan. Each one fell in line and was as silent as in a night-march; naught was to be heard but the crackling of the sand under the feet of the camels. After an hour's march—an hour which seemed interminable—they reached a hill which it was necessary to turn. Hafiz went in advance; he ascended the hill, and leaving his horse half way from the top, crept on his belly among the rocks. After gazing long, he noiselessly descended, put his horse to the gallop, and reached Abdallah's side, his face as calm as at his departure. "There are white tents in the distance," said he. "They are not Bedouins, but Arnauts from Djiddah. They are numerous, and are awaiting us; we have been betrayed. No matter; we will sell our skin more dearly than they will care to buy it. Forward, my son, and do your duty." And, calling six of the bravest of the company, Hafiz loaded his gun and again took the way to the height.

Abdallah had just reached the head of the column when a white smoke appeared from a rock, a bullet whizzed through the air, and a camel fell. Great confusion instantly prevailed in the caravan; the camels fell back, rushing against and overthrowing each other; the drivers fled to the rear, and the horsemen rushed to the front. It seemed like a forest shaken by the wind. The moans of the camels and neighing of the horses mingled with the shouts of the men. In the disorder, a handful of robbers, whose red vests, white drawers, and broad girdles easily showed them to be Arnauts, fell upon the litter and hurried it away with shouts of joy. It was in vain that Abdallah and his friends attempted to charge on them; the sharp-shooters in ambush felled them on the way. Thrice Ab-

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dallah forced his horse against his invisible foe; thrice he was forced to return, his comrades falling around him.

Abdallah trembled with rage; by his side, and not less excited, was Omar, rending his clothes—Omar, whose passion made him forget all prudence, and who thought of nothing but the treasure that was snatched from him. "Forward, my brother!" he cried. Both were reining up their horses for a last effort, when several musket shots followed each other rapidly. The Arnauts had forgotten old Hafiz, who suddenly came upon them from above and shot them down without pity.

The road clear, the brothers rushed forward, followed by Hafiz. "Gently, my son," cried he to Abdallah; "spare your horse; we have time."

"Where is Leila, my uncle? They are carrying her off; she is lost."

"Old fool," said Omar, "do you think that these robbers will wait for us? Twenty duros to him who brings down the dromedary!"

One of the Bedouins raised his gun, and, taking aim, fired, at the risk of killing the two women. The shot struck the shoulder of the animal, which fell with his precious burden.

"Well done, young man," said Hafiz, sarcastically, to the Bedouin. "The Arnauts will thank you; you have rid them of the only obstacle to their flight. Now the sultana is lost."

Hafiz had judged but too rightly. The robbers surrounded the litter and tore from it a woman wrapped in a mantle, in whom Abdallah recognized Leila; then, by the command of a magnificently-dressed chief, a man took her behind him and set off at full gallop. At this sight the son of Yusuf darted upon the enemy like an eagle from the clouds. "Dog! son of a dog!"

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he cried; "show your face, if you are a man! Is it to fly the better that you have so fine a horse?" And he fired his pistol at him.

"Wait, son of a Jew!" said the captain, turning round, "my sabre is thirsting for your blood."

"Forward, children of powder!" cried old Hafiz. "Charge, my sons! death before disgrace; Charge! Bullets do not kill. What is to be will be, according to God's will."

Abdallah and the Arnaut rushed upon each other at full speed. The captain advanced with a pistol in one hand and a sword in the other. Abdallah had nothing but a dagger, which he held in his hand as he leaned forward, almost concealed by the mare's neck. The Arnaut fired and missed. The horses met with a violent shock, and the riders engaged hand to hand. But Abdallah had the strength and rage of a lion; he seized his rival round the waist, shook him with a terrible grasp, and plunged his dagger into his breast. The blood spouted forth like wine from a pierced skin, and the Arnaut bounded up and reeled in his saddle. Abdallah snatched him from his horse and threw him on the ground as if to trample on him. "There is one that will drink no more," said Hafiz, leaping on the body to despoil it.

The fall of the captain, the swords of the Bedouins, who fell on the enemy like bees robbed of their honey, and the cries of the camel-drivers, who rushed thither with their guns, soon decided the day. The Arnaut troop disappeared amid dust and smoke, the bravest remaining in the rear and firing their pistols to protect a retreat which it was not dared to molest. The victory was dearly bought; more than one was wounded.

"Well, my brother," said Omar, with flashing eyes,

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"shall we stand here while these robbers are carrying off our property?"

"Forward, my friends!" cried Abdallah. "One more effort. We must have the sultana."

"She is here, my lord; she is here," answered several voices.

Abdallah turned abruptly and saw Leila, who had just been extricated from the litter, covered with dust and blood, with pale face and dishevelled hair, yet more beautiful than ever, despite this disorder. "Save me!" she cried, stretching out her arms. "Save me! My only hope is in you."

"Who was it, then, that those knaves carried off?" asked Hafiz.

"It was Cafour," said Leila. "She had put on my mantle and wrapped me in her bournous."

"Well played," said a Bedouin, laughing; "those sons of dogs have taken an ape for a woman."

"Let us begone quickly," cried the son of Mansour, feasting his eyes on Leila. "Let us begone; the day is ours. Come, madam, do not mourn for the slave," said he to Leila. "For two hundred dours I can buy just such another at Djiddah, which I shall be happy to offer you."

"Let us go," echoed the camel-drivers; "the band is large, and will return to attack us during the night."

Hafiz looked at Abdallah. "What!" said the young man, moved with pity, "shall we leave the negress in the hands of these wretches?"

"What is written is written," replied Omar, who had lost all desire to fight. "Is it wise, my brother, to risk your life and that of these brave Mussulmans for a heathen whom we can replace in two days? We must go; we are expected at Taif. Are you about to quit us when we are in need of you?"

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"Abdallah," said the young woman, raising her beautiful eyes to him, "do not abandon me!"

The son of Yusuf placed his hand on his heart, which he felt faltering. "No, no!" he exclaimed; "it shall not be said that a Bedouin forfeits his word. If a sack of coffee had been entrusted to me, I would not leave it in the hands of these robbers, and shall I abandon to them one of God's creatures? Are there any men here? Who will come with me?" There was silence, and one of the Beni Amurs stepped forth.

"There are six of us wounded, and the sultana is saved," said he. "We have kept our engagement."

"Come, my child," said Hafiz, ironically, "I see that we are the only two here that have madness in our veins. Let us go. With God's aid, we will recover the child."

"Adieu, my brother," said Abdallah, embracing Omar. "Take good care of the stranger. If you do not see me in two days, tell the sherif I have done my duty, and my mother not to weep over me." And, without turning his head, the son of Yusuf took the way to the desert, accompanied by Hafiz, who unclasped his bournous and threw over his shoulders a camel-driver's cloak. "We need the skin of the fox instead of the lion," said he, laughing.

Omar followed them with his eyes, and when he saw them disappear, "If they do not return," thought he, "it will be no great matter. I shall make a better bargain with the sherif than with that youth. It is not easy to dazzle or deceive these madcaps who never reason. Hurrah for men that calculate! They are always to be bought, and through their wisdom we get them at half price."

As he went on, Abdallah heard behind him the shouts of the camel-drivers and the noise of the moving caravan. He was quitting all that he loved for a strange

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child. More than once he was inclined to look back, but he dared not brave his uncle, who, his eyes fixed upon him, seemed to read the depths of his heart. When the last sound died away in the distance, Abdallah paused in spite of himself. His horse turned round, snuffing the wind, and anxious to rejoin his friends. Hafiz laid his hand on the young man's shoulder: "My son," said he, "your road lies before you."

CHAPTER XVII

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After an hour's march they came in sight of the Ar-naut tents, until then hidden by a rising ground. The camp was in the midst of a small tract of brushwood, where the cattle had been turned out to browse. "Let us stop here," said Hafiz, approaching a rock illuminated by the setting sun; "we have six hours before us."

The horses tethered, the old man set to work to pick up the dead branches and tie them in small bundles, with cartouches and cotton inside. When he had finished his task, he took from a bag a piece of dried meat and a handful of dates; and, having eaten them, lighted his pipe and began to smoke tranquilly. "Now, my nephew," said he, "I am going to sleep. Lovers do not need repose; but old men are not like lovers. Wake me when the Great Bear and her cubs are yonder in the horizon." A few moments after he was asleep, while Abdallah, his face buried in his hands, mused on her whom he had saved, and was never more to behold.

Hafiz awakened of his own accord just before the time appointed, and looked tenderly at his young

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companion. "Well, my child," said he, "you wished for danger, that you might forget your folly, and God has granted your prayer. Have courage; two friends that cling together will come out safe from the fire."

On nearing the camp the Bedouins glided among the briars and bushes. By creeping on their hands and knees between the horses' legs, they assured themselves that it was defenceless. No sentinels had been posted, except at a distant point; all were asleep; the fires had gone out, and only one tent was lighted. They noiselessly crept toward it; being in the shade, they could see without being seen. "Listen," said Hafiz; "perhaps we shall learn what has become of the child."

Three men, better dressed than soldiers, were seated on carpets, smoking long pipes, around a table,¹ on which coffee was served. A lamp in the middle dimly lighted their faces. All three were talking warmly.

"A bad day's work," said one of the officers. "Who would have thought that the captain would have let himself be killed by a camel-driver!"

"My dear Hassan," answered the youngest of the party, "what is one man's misfortune is another's good luck. Since the captain is dead, the command belongs to us."

"Very well, my dear Mohammed," returned Hassan; "but which of us three shall be chief?"

"I will sell my chance," said the one who had not yet spoken, and who stood with his back to Abdallah. "It is said that the woman we have taken is a relative of the Pacha of Egypt. Give me the sultana, and I will return to Epirus to live at my ease. A graybeard like me cares little for a woman, but the sherif will

¹ These tables, called *kursi*, are a species of benches from fifteen to eighteen inches high.

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think differently. To him the prisoner will be well worth five thousand dourous."

"Done," said Hassan. "Kara Shitan, I surrender to you my share of the prize."

"But I do not," said Mohammed; "I am twenty-five and do not sell women. The idea of marrying a sultana pleases me. I should not be sorry to be the pacha's cousin. My share of the command for the princess. I have time enough to become captain."

"We can arrange it," said the graybeard; "the sword to one, the woman to another, and the money to me."

"So be it," said Hassan. "I will give two thousand dourous."

"But what will Mohammed give?"

"Mohammed will promise anything you like," replied the young man, laughing. "He who has nothing but hope in his purse does not stop to haggle."

"You have a black mare; I will take her."

"Old Jew," cried Mohammed, "dare to touch my mare, and I will break your head."

"Then you shall not have the sultana," returned the graybeard.

"Who will hinder me?"

"A man that fears you little," cried Kara Shitan; and, going to the end of the tent, he touched the curtain that divided it in two. "The sultana is here; take her if you can," he said.

Mohammed drew his dagger. Hassan threw himself between the rivals, opposing prayers and counsels to threats and insults, without succeeding in imposing silence on the opponents.

"We have them," whispered Hafiz in Abdallah's ear. "I am going to draw them from the tent. Take the child, go with the horses, and wait for me at the Red Rocks till daybreak."

The old man crept to his bundles of sticks, and

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slipped them here and there under the most distant tents, lighting the end of a match which projected from each. Meanwhile Hassan had pacified the two chiefs by dint of persuasions and promises. Kara Shitan delightedly thrust in his girdle a magnificent sabre, which Mohammed eyed with regret. "Well," said he, "since I have bought the sultana, give her to me."

"It is just," said the graybeard. He called the stranger, the curtain rose, and a veiled woman came forth, wrapped in an Egyptian mantle. The young Arnaut approached her, and said, in a softened voice, "Madam, war has its rights; you no longer belong to the sherif, but to me; I have bought you with my gold; if necessary, I would have bought you with my blood."

"It is a dear bargain," said a mocking voice which made Abdallah start.

"Beauty is above all price," said Mohammed. "What treasure could pay for your charms?"

"Two purses would be enough," replied the veiled lady.

"Madam, that was not the opinion of the sherif. I am sure that the Commander of the Faithful would give half his wealth to be in my place, with the beautiful Egyptian by his side."

"If the caravan is still on its way, the beautiful Egyptian will be at Taif to-morrow," returned the stranger.

"Who are you, then?" asked Mohammed. For the answer, the veil fell, and showed the ebony face and white teeth of Cafour. The negress made so strange a figure that the old Arnaut could not help bursting into a laugh which raised to its height the fury of his companion.

"Woe to him who has trifled with me!" cried Mohammed, looking at Kara Shitan; "he shall pay me sooner or later. As for you, dog, you shall carry it no

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farther." And, blind with rage, he drew a pistol and fired at the child. The negress staggered, uttering a cry of pain and terror. At the same instant a shot was heard, and Mohammed reeled and fell. Abdallah was in the tent with a pistol in his hand.

"To arms!" cried the chiefs, putting their hand to their belt. Swifter than lighting, Cafour overturned the table and lamp with her foot, and Abdallah felt a little hand grasp his and draw him to the back of the tent. To enter the woman's apartments and lift a corner of the canvas was an easy thing for Cafour, who seemed to see in the dark. Once outside, Abdallah took the child in his arms and fled to the desert.

The voice of the chiefs had roused the whole band, but on rushing into the tent they could find no one. "To horse!" cried Hassan; "dead or alive, the traitor shall not escape us."

All at once a burning torch fell in the midst of the brush. The frightened horses rushed into the plain, and at the same time the cry of fire was raised. The conflagration spread in every direction, while at a distance shots were fired at the sentinels. "Come, my children," said the captain, "it is an attack; the enemy is at hand. Forward!"

Hafiz had his ear to the ground. "Allah is great; Abdallah is saved!" he exclaimed, when he heard the enemy coming toward him. He plunged into a thicket and waited for the Arnauts to pass; then, leaping upon a stray horse, he galloped into the desert, without troubling himself about the balls that whistled round him.

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CHAPTER XVIII

THE SILVER LEAF

Abdallah ran with his burden to the rock where he had tethered the horses. He seated Cafour before him on the saddle, and gave full rein to Hamama, who flew over the ground, followed by the horse of Hafiz. An hour passed before the son of Yusuf dared stop to listen. Becoming more tranquil in proportion as he advanced, he at last slackened his speed, and tried to steer his course in the darkness toward the place where he was to meet his uncle.

During this rapid flight Cafour had remained mute and motionless, pressed close to Abdallah. When she understood that the danger was passed, she called him her savior. "Were you too a prisoner?" she whispered.

"No, thank God," answered Abdallah.

"Then why did you come among the tents of your enemies?"

"Why?" said the son of Yusuf, smiling; "to save you, of course."

The answer surprised Cafour. She mused for some time. "Why did you wish to save me?" she said.

"Because you had been confided to my keeping."

"Keep me always, Abdallah; no one will protect me like you."

"I am not your master," answered the young chief; "you belong to Leila."

Cafour sighed and said no more. On reaching the Red Rocks, Abdallah lifted her from the saddle. She uttered a cry, which she instantly smothered. "It is nothing, master; I am wounded," she whispered, and she stretched out her bleeding arm. The ball had

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grazed the shoulder, tearing the flesh. Abdallah examined the wound by the light of the stars, then sponged and bandaged it, while Cafour looked at him with astonishment.

"Since I do not belong to you, why do you bind up my wound?" she asked.

"Silence, heathen! you know not the words of the Book of Truth: 'Serve God, and associate no creature with him; show kindness unto parents, and relations, and orphans, and the poor, and your neighbor who is of kin to you, and also your neighbor who is a stranger, and to your familiar companion, and the traveler, and the captives whom your right hands shall possess; for God loveth neither pride, nor vanity, nor avarice.'"

"That is beautiful," said Cafour; "it was a great God who said it."

"Hush, and go to sleep," interrupted the young man; "the road will be long to-morrow, and you need rest." As he spoke, Abdallah took the child on his lap, and, wrapping her in his bournous, supported her head with his arm. Cafour soon fell asleep. At first she tossed about and talked in her sleep, while her heart beat so loudly that Abdallah could hear it. By degrees she grew calmer, her limbs relaxed, and she slept so sweetly that she could hardly be heard to breathe. The soldier gently rocked the young girl whom the fate of war had given him for a day, thinking, as he gazed on her, of his mother and all that she had suffered for him. He remained thus through the night, enjoying a peace to which he had before been a stranger. A deep silence reigned around him on the earth; not a breath of wind nor a sound was stirring; in the heavens all was motionless save that luminous army which for centuries has obeyed the command of the Eternal. This repose of all things refreshed Abdallah's soul. and

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he forgot both the dangers of the day and the anxiety of the morrow.

A faint streak of light in the horizon had scarcely announced the dawn, when the cry of a jackal was heard in the distance. His cry was answered, and a panting horse bounded to the rock—Hafiz was safe.

"Well, nephew," said he, laughing, "the trick has succeeded; they are smoked out like so many rats. Forward! we must not make them wait for us at Taif."

A red light streaked the east. Abdallah spread the carpet of prayer, and the two comrades, with their faces turned toward Mecca, thanked the All-Powerful who had rescued them from peril.

"Abdallah," said Cafour, falling on her knees before her savior, "you are my god; I will worship no other."

"Silence, heathen!" cried the son of Yusuf. "There is but one God, who has no associate—the Eternal, the Incomparable; it is he whom you must worship and adore."

"Then your God shall be my God," said Cafour. "I will not have a god that leaves me to be murdered."

"Your god," said Abdallah, "is deaf, dumb, and blind, it is some piece of wood rotting in the Maghreb."

"No," interrupted the child, "my god was with me, and did not help me. Here," she added, taking from her hair a tuft of feathers, "take it; break it in pieces; I want it no longer."

"Is that bunch of feathers your god?" said Hafiz, smiling.

"Yes," replied the child, "it is the god my mother gave me when she sold me. It is pretty; look at it." And, pulling out and breaking the feathers while she loaded them with reproaches, she took from the bunch a thin piece of silver, which she gave to Abdallah.

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"My uncle," cried the latter, in a transport of joy, "see what has come to us from the Maghreb! God has sent us the shamrock-leaf. You have saved me, my uncle. Glory and gratitude to God!"

And the two friends, intoxicated with joy, embraced the child, who, not understanding their caresses, gazed at them with tears in her eyes, astonished and happy at feeling herself beloved.

CHAPTER XIX

THE SECRET

When the two friends at last perceived the caravan winding like a huge serpent in the distance, night was approaching; the last beams of the sun shone on the white houses of Taif, gleaming amid the gardens like eglantines in a thicket. They were quitting the empire of the sands; the peril was overcome and the journey finished. At the sight of Taif, Abdallah was seized with bitter sorrow. Restless, troubled, bereft of his reason, one thought filled his soul—Leila was lost to him. The Bedouins received their companions with cries of joy. Omar embraced his brother with the greatest tenderness. Abdallah remained cold to all these caresses; his only emotion was on parting with Cafour. The poor girl threw herself into her savior's arms, and nothing could tear her from them, until at last Abdallah was forced harshly to command her to return to her mistress. She departed in tears. The son of Yusuf fixed a longing gaze on her; he had broken the last link that bound him to Leila.

Cafour was approaching the litter when Omar called to her, showing her two articles which he held in his hand. "Come hither, child of Satan," he said in a half-

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jeering, half-threatening tone; "what is the difference between this whip and this necklace of five strings of pearls?"

"The same difference that there is between your brother and you," answered the negress. "One is as beautiful as the rainbow; the other is fit for nothing but to kindle the fires of the pit."

"You have your father's wit," returned Omar, calmly; "it will not be hard, therefore, for you to choose. Do you want the necklace?"

"Yes, indeed," said the negress, with sparkling eyes. "What am I to do for it?"

"Very little. In an hour you will be in the harem; everyone will wish to see you, and nothing will be easier than for you to gain admittance to the sherif's wife, the Sultana Fatima. Repeat to her, word for word, what I shall tell you, and the necklace is yours."

"Give it to me," said Cafour, stretching out her hand; "I am listening."

"While you are amusing the sultana with your ape's face and kittinish grimaces, whisper to her, 'Mistress, I have a message to you from a friend. "Moon of May," he says, "a new moon is approaching. If you do not wish her to disturb the serenity of your nights, keep the sun in the sign of Gemini. Importune, urge, and command. Take for your motto, Love is like madness; everything is forgiven it."'"

"Repeat the last sentence," said Cafour. "Good; I know it now; 'Love is like madness; everything is forgiven it.' The sultana shall have your message. One word only: can these words do any harm to your brother?"

"None," replied the son of Mansour, suppressing a smile. "Abdallah has nothing whatever to do with it; he is threatened by no danger; and even if he were in peril, these words would insure his safety. Farewell;

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“speak of this to no one; and if you obey me, rely on my generosity. The date is ripe, who will gather it?” he added to himself. “I am rid of the handsome Abdallah; it remains for me now to second the sultana’s jealousy and add to the enemies of the sherif. The game is not without danger; but, cost what it may, Leila must quit the harem; once outside of it, she is mine.”

On rejoining her mistress, Cafour was surprised to see her pale and haggard, her eyes glittering with fever. “What is the matter?” said the child. “Are you weeping when your happiness is about to begin? when you will have four slaves to wait on you, robes of velvet and satin, Cashmere scarfs, slippers embroidered with gold and pearls, enamel necklaces, diamond tiaras, and ruby and sapphire bracelets? What more can a woman desire? You were so happy at coming here on quitting Egypt, why have you changed?”

“You cannot understand me—you are only a child,” said Leila, in a languishing voice.

“I am no longer a child, mistress,” returned the negress. “I am almost twelve years old; I am a woman; you can trust in me.”

“Ah! my poor Cafour,” cried the Egyptian, sighing, “if you would preserve your heart, keep your eyes shut. Why did I see that handsome young man? Had it not been for him, I should have joyfully entered the harem; now I shall be there like the dead among the living.”

“Do you love Abdallah, then?” asked the child, touched by this confidence.

“Do I love him? Is it possible to see him without loving him? Is there a more beautiful face than his in Paradise? His look is so gracious, his voice so sweet, his very name is perfume! Do I love him? Awake, my soul lives for him alone; asleep, my heart wakes and languishes with love! Would to God that I

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had been born amid the tents, with this Bedouin for my brother, that I might cast myself into his arms with none to despise me!"

"Go with him," said Cafour. "I will tell him to carry you off."

"What are you thinking of? I am a slave; I have a master. Besides, do you think that Abdallah would ever break his word? He is taking me to the sherif; would you have him betray his faith?"

"Then tell the sherif to give you Abdallah for a husband."

"Hush, idiot. Such a request would be the death-sentence of us all."

Cafour musingly repeated to herself Omar's message; then, looking at Leila, "Mistress, said she, "if you should become Abdallah's wife, and go to dwell with him amid the tents, would you keep me with you?"

"Always, child; I love you; you shall never quit me."

"Should I be your slave and Abdallah's all my life?"

"Of course. But of what use is such a question?"

"Swear this to me," returned Cafour, in a solemn voice, "and let me alone. Do not question me; do not shake your head with disdain. What do you risk in swearing what I ask? Would you sell me or send me away?"

"No, indeed. Should it please God for me to become the wife of him whom I love like my own soul, you shall always remain with us; I swear it to you in the name of God, the clement, the merciful, the sovereign of the worlds—"

"My mistress, I am an ignorant heathen; swear it to me only by the God of Abdallah."

Talking thus, the two friends reached the harem, where numerous companions awaited them. Cafour, still laughing, leaped from the palanquin and ran toward a large room, brilliantly lighted, and filled with

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tables covered with silver and flowers. Leila complained of the fatigue of the journey, and retired to her chamber to weep without restraint. Useless grief, powerless to remedy an ill that could not be cured! "He who is intoxicated with wine," says the sage of Shiraz, "awakens during the night; he who is intoxicated with love awakens only on the morning of the resurrection!"

CHAPTER XX

THE PATIENCE OF REYNARD

Abdallah wished to set out the same evening, and Hafiz was not less impatient. It seemed to him that by fleeing to the desert his nephew would leave anxiety and sorrow behind him. But the sherif had announced that he would receive the chiefs of the caravan the next day, and it was impossible to decline the honor.

At an early hour they repaired to the palace. The courtyard was full of Bedouins, dressed in their blue robes set off by a scarlet scarf thrown across the shoulder. All wished to shake hands with the brave Abdallah and the prudent Hafiz. Omar talked in a low voice with the old shepherd; for the first time he complained of the dangers of the road; for the first time he reproached the sherif for having exposed so many brave men to almost certain death. Hafiz approved his words, and seconded them with a warmth which delighted the son of Mansour.

The visitors were led by black slaves into a room covered with rich carpets, and surrounded with divans of green silk embroidered with gold. The walls were bare of all ornament except a beautiful Turkish sabre, set with topazes and rubies, a gift from the sultan.

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Omar pointed it out to Hafiz, who, while murmuring against what he called a weakness, nevertheless bowed respectfully before the Commander of the Faithful. After receiving the salutations of all the band, the sherif clapped his hands, and pipes and coffee were instantly served. The Bedouins seated themselves on the ground, and each smoked in silence. Abdallah started; among the crowd of servants who stood awaiting their master's orders, he had just seen Cafour, who raised her hand to her throat. Whether it was to him or to some other that the child made the sign, he could not guess; no one raised his eyes, least of all Omar.

The descendant of the Prophet seemed buried in deep reflection. He was a noble-looking old man, whose white beard, large nose, and calm eyes gave him an air of majesty. A large turban, a blue robe of the finest cashmere, and a girdle of gold and purple, in which glittered a dagger covered with precious stones, added to his dignity. At heart, the sherif was a sage who thought of no one but himself. Intractable toward all who disturbed his peace, he was the gentlest of mankind when his passions and habits were let alone. Power had not spoiled him; he readily listened to the truth when it did not affect himself, and suffered without complaint the most shameless falsehoods of his flatterers and servants. Fastidious, a great lover of stories, and a refined poet, his only weakness—a weakness natural to his age—was the desire to be loved. Thanks to this secret, which she had learned the very first day, the beautiful Fatima made her master the most obedient of slaves; she made him submit to all her fancies by telling him that a woman's caprices are a proof of her love. At sixty it is easier to believe than to quarrel, and the sherif yielded to avoid a storm, too happy when he was rewarded with a caress. This morning, however, there was not a cloud on the

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horizon. The Commander of the Faithful seemed in excellent humor; he smiled as he ran his fingers through his long beard, and looked like a man just waking from a blissful dream which he would fain retain.

The second pipe finished, the sherif took up the conversation, and in the most gracious terms thanked the Bedouins and Omar for their visit and their services. Instead of replying to this courtesy, the son of Mansour started up like a criminal struck with terror, and, prostrating himself before the descendant of the Prophet, kissed his feet.

"Son of Ala and of Hassan," said he, in a broken voice, "I know what the slave deserves who suffers his master's trust to be violated. I know my crime, and await without complaint the punishment reserved for me by your justice."

"Rise," said the sherif, kindly. "What is written is written. God sends disaster and success by turns to men, in order that he may know the believers, and choose His witnesses from among you. As to the insult offered me by those wretches, I shall choose the day and hour for reparation. Patience—with patience everything comes in due season."

"Alas!" continued the son of Mansour, still on his knees; "the attack was nothing; my brother Abdallah and his brave Bedouins repulsed the traitors. But we were surprised; the slave was for a moment in the hands of the enemy; those men, without faith and honor, tore off her veil, and profaned with their unworthy looks that beauty which should have been sacred from all."

"Enough!" interrupted the sherif, displeased at this tale. "The care of my honor concerns me alone. Patience!"

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"Patience!" exclaimed Hafiz; "that was what the fox said when he feigned death."

"What was it that the fox said?" asked the sheriff, looking sternly at Hafiz, who seemed moved by any other feeling than that of fear.

"There was once a fox who was growing old," said the Bedouin, "and who abandoned the chase and all adventures in order every night to visit a poultry-yard near his hole, where he grew fat without trouble or danger. One night he forgot how the time was passing; when he was ready to go out, he found the sun risen and every one at work. To return safely seemed impossible; so, in order not to brave certain danger, he stretched himself by the roadside and pretended to be dead, saying, 'Patience—in patience there is safety.' The first who passed by paid no attention to him; the second turned him over with his foot, to be sure that he was dead; the third was a child, who amused himself by pulling out his whiskers. 'Patience!' said the fox. 'The child knows not what he is doing; he does not mean to insult me. It is better to suffer vexation than to run the risk of death.' Next came a hunter with a gun on his shoulder. 'A fox's nail is a sovereign remedy for a felon,' said he, taking out his knife. 'Patience,' said the fox; 'it is better to live with three paws than to die with four;' and he let himself be mutilated without stirring. Next came a woman with a child on her shoulder. 'This fox's teeth will make a necklace that will preserve my babe from the evil eye,' she said."

"I know the story," interrupted the sheriff; "when the mother came near, the fox flew in her face."

"My story does not say so," returned Hafiz, gravely. "When once we compound with our courage, we know not where to stop. The fox let himself be robbed of his teeth, repeating 'Patience!' and lay still till a last

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thief tore out his heart, when he saw, but too late, that patience is the surest of dangers."

"I begin to think so," said the sherif, "since a Bedouin comes to my palace to tell me his foolish stories. A shepherd must be rude indeed not to understand my indulgence and to insult my goodness. If the caravan was attacked in a safe country, traversed by all the merchants, whose fault was it except those who chose for their leader a child, whom I spare through pity? A dozen armed and resolute Bedouins always cross the desert without any one daring to attack them. If the Arnauts surprised you, a snare must have been laid for you, into which you fell either through folly or treachery."

"My lord," cried the son of Mansour, raising his voice in supplication, "you speak truly; this was my fault. In choosing my brother and friend for the leader of the caravan, I ought to have remembered that at our age passion renders us blind. Chance destroyed us. At the beginning of the journey the sight of the slave troubled the young man, and made him forget his prudence."

"What do I hear?" cried the sherif, with flashing eyes. "Is this the way that I am obeyed—is this the way that I am respected? Woe to him who has trifled with me. He shall see whether I will submit to insult. Merchant, you shall be punished for your imprudence, and, young man, you shall suffer for your folly." And, calling a negro with a large sabre at his side, the Commander of the Faithful pointed to Omar and Abdallah, making a horizontal movement with his hand. It was the sentence of death.

The Bedouins looked at each other, shuddering, but no one, not even Hafiz, dared rebel against the descendant of the Prophet. Omar heard the sentence without changing his countenance; he looked around

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him as if to implore aid, and, raising his hand, made a sign to the negress which she did not seem to comprehend. The son of Mansour frowned angrily. "Accursed be the dervish!" murmured he. "Can he have told the truth? Is my confidence in the Bedouin about to plunge me into this ruin? Can I have loved this madman better than I thought?"

Abdallah raised his eyes, and proudly smiled at the executioner. "Poor child," said Hafiz, embracing his nephew; "I have slain you."

"No, my father," replied the young man, calmly, "it is God that gives life and death. Be resigned, and comfort my mother. Do not pity me; to me death is better than life." Then, turning to Omar, who still kept his eyes fixed on the negress, he gave him his hand. "My brother, pardon me," said he, "in the name of her who watched over your childhood." And, bowing respectfully to the Commander of the Faithful, he followed the executioner.

"Stop!" cried Cafour, falling at the sheriff's feet. "It was my fault; it was I that snatched off my mistress' veil. Kill me, but spare Abdallah."

"Drive off this daughter of a dog, and punish her till she is silent," said the sheriff.

"Pardon!" cried the child, as a negro was carrying her off—"pardon!" and with a desperate effort she tore herself from the slave, leaving a piece of her dress in his hands. "Pity!" she murmured, clasping the knees of the sheriff, who rudely repulsed her. "Pity, master; Abdallah is innocent; he was not the guilty one." Then, suddenly spying Omar's contracted features, she sprang up as if struck with lightning, and stretching her hands toward the prince, "Do not be cruel," she said. "Remember that love is like madness; everything is forgiven it."

"Stop!" cried the sheriff to the executioner. "There

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is something strange in this," thought he; "it is the same sentence that Fatima repeated to me this morning, and refused to explain to me. Come here, child," said he to Cafour, in a milder tone. "Where do these words come from—do you know?"

"Yes," said Cafour; "they come from lips that open only for consolation and pity."

"Do you know the meaning of them?"

"Yes," replied Cafour, trembling as she spoke. "Abdallah has never heard these words, but Omar has long known the secret of them; question him; he will tell you everything."

"Oh, my master," cried Omar, dragging himself to the sheriff's feet, and speaking in a suppressed voice, "the child is right. I know these words but too well; it was they which caused my fault, and which will perhaps excuse it. When you summoned me to Taif, my errand was suspected; before I could quit your palace, a mad promise was wrung from me, which I have only too faithfully obeyed. I compromised the slave as I had been commanded. Could I resist a will protected by your love? Happy is he who can inspire such ardent passion; will not happiness render him indulgent?"

While uttering these unblushing falsehoods, the son of Mansour studied the sheriff's face, which resumed its serenity. Omar soon ceased to supplicate the old man who held his life in his hands. Sure of his victory, he began to flatter him beyond measure, and, by adroit words, gradually soothed the last emotions of anger in his soul.

"Rise! I pardon you," said the sheriff, at length. "I also pardon this proud Bedouin, who braves me even under the sword of the executioner. I have shown that I fear no one, and that I know how to punish those who insult me; it is enough; I keep the blood of my

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faithful followers for a better occasion. Young man," he added, looking at Abdallah with a kindly smile, "remember that henceforth your life belongs to me; I rely on you, as well as your friends, to avenge our common insult."

For his sole answer, the son of Yusuf took the sherif's hand and kissed it with emotion, while Hafiz burst into transports of joy and gratitude.

"Here!" said the Commander of the Faithful, calling Cafour; "come hither, daughter of night; is this all that the sultana told you?"

"No," answered the negress, boldly, putting on a mysterious air. "The sultana told me that if you pardoned her her mad love, she must also have a proof of your affection."

"Speak," said the old man; "what can I refuse a poor creature that loves me to distraction?"

"The sultana fears that you will refuse her request; to grant it, she says, needs a love as great as her own."

"Speak," said the sherif; "I am dying of impatience."

"Well, then, do not give her for a rival this strange woman, dishonored by the gaze of the Bedouins and Arnauts."

"Is that all?" replied the Commander of the Faithful, smiling. "What! raise this woman to my throne, after all that has passed? Never! She shall remain a slave, and end her days in a corner of the harem."

"That is not what the sultana means; she is anxious and jealous. What she desires is that Leila should quit the palace, never more to return. 'Let my husband,' said she, 'let the beloved of my soul give me a last pledge of his love. Can he not leave this creature to those who brought her hither? It will be easy to find an honorable match for her among the Bedouins, and I shall be left alone to love the master of my life.'"

"Oh, the weakness of women!" cried the descendant

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of the Prophet. "The Koran is right in recommending indulgence to us who have strength and sense. This jealousy of Fatima's is madness, at which I should blush to yield, were it not my pleasure to show her that nothing is impossible either to my power or my love. Bring Leila hither, and tell the sultana that her rival shall not return to the harem. Such is my will; I mean that all shall respect it."

And, turning to the Bedouins, "My friends," said the sherif, in a loud voice, "I make you the judges of my conduct. What should I do with the Egyptian woman whom you have escorted hither? Through respect for myself, I cannot take her as a wife; through respect for the pacha, I cannot keep her as a slave. This, therefore, is what I propose to do: if there is any one among you who is willing to marry a foreigner, I will give her to him with a fitting dowry, otherwise I will marry her to some rich merchant of Medina or Mecca."

"God is great!" cried the son of Yusuf, seizing Hafiz's arm. "We will look no farther for the four-leaved shamrock; it is here; it is mine; I have found happiness."

"Courage, my son," said the old man; "it is needed even to be happy. I do not think," he added, looking at the sherif, "that it will be necessary to go to Mecca to marry the stranger. If a husband only is needed, here is a young man who will yield to no one either in birth, fortune, or courage."

"My lord," said Omar, bowing low to the sherif, "I should never have had the boldness to raise my eyes to a woman confided to my charge; but, since things have changed, and you permit it, I venture to aspire to the hand of Leila. She is a slave of the pacha; from her childhood she has been accustomed to the ease and luxury of the harem; on coming hither she dreamed of a fortune which has escaped her grasp; who

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knows whether tent-life will not seem hard to her? Wealth is a necessity to a woman that has always lived in a palace. I entreat your lordship, therefore, to give the stranger to the one that shall offer the largest dowry; it will be a last mark of kindness to her who owes everything to your goodness."

"The request is just," said the sheriff. "Bring the Egyptian hither. Let the suitors come forward; I will hear their proposals."

"My uncle," murmured the son of Yusuf, "I am lost!"

"At last," said Omar, "Leila is mine."

Cafour looked at the two brothers, and ran to the harem.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE AUCTION.

While the slaves went in search of Leila, Hafiz approached the son of Mansour.

"Omar," said he, "listen to an old man, who has dandled you on his knees. It is said that you are richer than your father; women bow before your fortune, and there is not a merchant in Egypt or Syria but would think himself honored by your alliance. Nothing fetters your desires. Abdallah, on the contrary, can never love another woman; he has given his heart to her whom he saved. Be generous; pay to-day the debt of gratitude by making your brother and Halima happy."

"My brother is a selfish fellow," answered Omar. "I have suffered too much through him already. He knows that I wish this Egyptian woman; he knows that I will have her at any price; what does he expect to

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gain, therefore, by declaring himself my rival? If I should lose a hundred thousand piastres, of what advantage would it be to him? Let him give up Leila, and I will try to forget that this very day he has put my head for the second time in danger."

"It is well for you that you are a Mussulman," said Hafiz; "otherwise, we would teach you before the day was over that an ounce of lead weighs more than all your gold; but you have not succeeded as you think, and, with the aid of God, we will confound your abominable selfishness."

Omar shrugged his shoulders and went to meet Leila. She had just entered, concealed from all eyes by the wrappings which enveloped her, yet it seemed to poor Abdallah that a fiery glance shot from the thick veil, which he could scarce withstand. Cafour followed her mistress. What she had said to the sultana none could tell, but she had on her neck a necklace of pink coral, which certainly had not been cut for a slave. From time to time she ran to a latticed balcony which overlooked the room and exchanged mysterious words with invisible figures. The whole harem was there, deeply interested in the fair Leila, and perhaps offering up prayers for the son of Yusuf.

Abdallah was the first to speak. "My sole fortune," said he, "is the spring which I have discovered, and the garden which I have planted. With my father's arms and my mare, these are my only possessions. All are yours, Leila, if you will accept my heart and life."

"They are not worth a hundred thousand piastres," said Omar, coldly. "Here at Taif I have a garden of orange-trees, where the sherif sometimes does me the honor to take coffee. This garden is worth more than two hundred thousand piastres; I offer it to Leila in pledge for a like sum of jewels."

"Jewels!" said Hafiz. "My nephew has those which

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are as rich as yours. Here is a casket which is worth all your promises."

To the general astonishment, the old shepherd, aided by Cafour, opened a tortoise-shell and mother-of-pearl basket, filled with ear-rings, bracelets, and precious stones. Abdallah could not repress a cry. Was not that ruby bracelet the one which Leila wore on her arm on the day of the attack, and was not the coral necklace one which Cafour had just snatched from her neck? He attempted to speak; a gesture of his uncle stopped him.

"Beautiful jewels which have been worn already!" said the son of Mansour, biting his lip. "I do not ask where all these spoils of women come from, which I esteem as they deserve; but my generosity shall not be outdone. I offer three hundred thousand piastres."

"Promising is not giving," interrupted Hafiz; "something more than words is needed."

For his sole reply, Omar drew a pocket-book from his girdle, and, taking from it several papers, handed them to the sherif. "My lord," said he, "these are the orders which you sent me some months ago, and which are already filled. They are worth more than a million piastres; will your worship refuse to be his slave's security till to-morrow to these exacting Bedouins?"

"It shall be as you desire," answered the sherif. "I will be your security for a hundred thousand piastres."

"If this sum is all that is needed," said one of the Bedouins, "we will not leave a companion in trouble, and will give a lesson to this merchant who forgets himself. Here are our sabres; we will redeem them with a hundred thousand piastres." And, taking off his yataghan, he flung it at the sherif's feet with a contemptuous glance at Omar, while Hafiz approached

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to do the same, and to set an example to the rest of the band.

"Take back your sabre," said the Commander of the Faithful to the Bedouin. "I will be security for you and your friends. God forbid that I should see you disarmed about me, you who are my strength and my glory. Omar," he added, "before making new promises, perhaps you would do well to reflect. Repentance often follows satisfied passion. A lost slave can be replaced, but friends lost are never to be found again."

"Commander of the Faithful," proudly rejoined the son of Mansour, "it was on the faith of your word that I entered into this business, and, unless you command me to stop, I will carry it through. I fear no one's displeasure but yours. And, to put an end at once to this wrangling, I offer a million piastres; it is not too large a dowry for a woman whom your lordship has honored with his protection."

"Are you rich enough to commit such follies?" said the descendant of the Prophet. "I shall remember it on the first occasion."

"Command, my lord," said the merchant; "my fortune and life are yours."

A deep silence followed. Leila, who had remained standing, sunk upon a divan; Abdallah cast down his head; and Hafiz and his friends threatened Omar, who braved them with a disdainful air. Cafour began to gesticulate in a strange manner toward the balcony, and disappeared. All eyes were fixed on the sherif, who evidently hesitated.

"I have given my word," said he at last, slowly addressing the Bedouins; "you are witnesses that everything has been done in an impartial manner. This merchant, your companion in the caravan, offers a mil-

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lion; the slave, therefore, must belong to him, if none of you offer more."

"Where could such treasures be found in the desert?" cried Hafiz. "Souls sold to Satan alone possess this infernal wealth. As for us, we have nothing but our guns and sabres; may the day come when their value will be felt!"

"You forget Abdallah's jewels," said Omar, smiling.

"Ah! my brother," cried the son of Yusuf, "what have I done that you should treat me thus? Ought you to be the one to plunge a dagger into my breast?"

"What is this?" asked the sherif of two slaves who laid a heavy casket of chased silver at the feet of Abdallah.

"My lord, it is the treasure of the son of Yusuf," answered one of the porters, as he opened the casket and took up handfuls of the most beautiful precious stones ever seen, which at first glance were seen to be worth more than a million.

"It is strange," thought the sherif, "how much this diamond tiara and these topaz bracelets resemble those I gave the sultana. Who has sent you?" he asked the slave.

"My lord," replied the negro, bowing, "love is like madness; all things are forgiven it." And he went out.

Abdallah thought himself the sport of a dream. Omar turned pale with rage. "There is some snare here," murmured he; "no matter, I will have the last word. I will give two million piastres, if necessary."

Four more slaves, heavily laden with plate, silver lamps, and chased cups, paused like the first before Abdallah, and laid this treasure at his feet. At the first glance, the sherif recognized a magnificent epergne, the ornament of his harem, which he had received as a present from the sultan, and given, not without regret, to Fatima, the day after a quarrel.

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"Who can have given orders to bring all these treasures hither," he cried.

"My lord," replied the porters, bowing, "love is like madness; all things are forgiven it."

"Let these knaves be bastinadoed," said the Commander of the Faithful; "I will teach them to answer me in proverbs. Who sent them?"

"My lord, it was Cafour," replied one of the slaves, in a tremulous voice.

"Bring that child of the devil hither," said the sheriff. "If she is let alone she will carry off my whole palace."

The four slaves had not quitted the room when six more entered, carrying a litter heaped with the most costly robes and richest stuffs. At the head of the procession was Cafour, giving orders with the gravity of an imaum. The sheriff called her, and, taking her by the ear, "Come here, wretch," said he; "once for all, will you tell me the meaning of these follies?"

"Love is like madness; all things are forgiven it," answered Cafour, gravely.

"Do you dare to mix up the sultana with this disorder?"

"The sultana is there," rejoined Cafour, tranquilly, pointing to the balcony; "she has seen and heard everything; she knows all, and," she added, lowering her voice, "she is furious."

"Furious? and at what?" cried the astounded sheriff.

"She knows," continued Cafour, "that you regret having sacrificed Leila; she has guessed the part played by this merchant, who is bidding in your name; she feels that passion alone could hurry you away so far as to make you humble these brave Bedouins, who are the honor of your empire. 'Since he loves me no longer,' she said, 'I want no more of his favors; take away from my sight the jewels which he has given me, and the robes with which I delighted in adorning my-

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self to please him. Carry all to Abdallah; let him contend for me to the last moment. If the master of my soul return to me, what need have I of riches? if he abandon me, I wish to keep nothing but the memory of his love."

The sherif looked at the balcony somewhat ill-humoredly. He fancied that he spied through the lattice a little hand tearing a lace handkerchief in pieces, and the sound of tears and stifled sobs made him cast down his head. That instant he became conscious that the friendship of the Beni Amurs was worth more to him than the gratitude of Omar, and decided on his course.

"I will not be made an accomplice of unworthy weaknesses," said he, in a solemn voice. "I never take back a promise which I have made. I wished to secure a suitable dowry for this woman, who is under my protection; a hundred thousand piastres is sufficient. As to deciding between the rivals, that belongs to Leila. Let her take the merchant or the Bedouin, the city or the desert, it matters little to me. I shall respect her choice, and force all others to do the same."

"Neither David nor Solomon could have judged more righteously," cried Hafiz.

The two brothers stood by the side of Leila. Abdallah gazed at her with deep tenderness, and was mute with hope and fear. Omar spoke, moved with anger and jealousy.

"Think of the future," said he; "do not sacrifice to this man the flower of your youth and beauty. Do you know the life of women in the tents?—a beggarly and slavish existence. Are your hands made to grind corn, milk sheep, weave cloth, and gather grass and sticks? Will this Bedouin give you the baths, jewels, and perfumes to which you are accustomed? Will he die your eyebrows and eyelids? will he wash your tresses with orange-flower water, and dry them with

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musk and amber? With me, you will have women to wait on you, robes to deck you, and jewels to adorn you; you will not be a servant, but a mistress; each of your caprices will be law and a pleasure to me."

Leila bowed, took the trembling hand of Abdallah, and placed it on her head. "I am my lord's slave," she said. "A stranger, I have no other refuge than he; an orphan, I have no other family. He is my father, my mother and my brother. Oh, my beloved," she added, in a low voice, raising her eyes, "at last I am thine, and can tell thee that thou art my joy and my life." And, smiling and weeping at the same time, she kissed the hand of her husband.

The Commander of the Faithful gazed delightedly at this spectacle, which renewed his youth. "It is rather a hard lesson for Fatima," thought he; "but I am not sorry for having confounded the sultana; she will be cured for some time of her incurable jealousy."

Omar was mute; his contracted features, his threatening eyes, everything about him betrayed the conflict of grief and pride.

"Son of Mansour," said Hafiz, "you should marry Cafour. Your soul is as black as her skin; you would have children worthy of their grandfather, Satan."

"You are cruel, my uncle," exclaimed the son of Yusuf. "If Omar had been in my place, he would have spared us. My brother," he added, extending his hand to the Egyptian, "forgive me my happiness."

"You are shrewder than I; I congratulate you on your success," answered Omar. And he quitted the room in despair.

"What a fine thing is youth!" said Hafiz; "how honest! how confiding! what faith in virtue! As for me, I am old, and have been in battle. When I find a wicked man under my feet, I crush him like a scorpion, that he may sting me no more."

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CHAPTER XXII.

THE ARRIVAL.

It is easier to retain wealth in the hand of a prodigal, or to carry water in a sieve, than to lodge patience in the heart of a lover. The day had not dawned and the bird had not quitted its nest when the son of Yusuf awakened his companions, and arranged in a long file the camels loaded with the gifts of the sherif and the sultana. He impatiently awaited his beloved, whom Fatima had kept with her all night, that she might tell her the story of her love. A woman always loves the rival that she has ceased to fear. When Calfour opened the door of the harem and showed herself, uglier and more smiling than ever, Abdallah uttered a cry of surprise and joy. Could the woman behind the child, who stretched out her hand to him, really be Leila?

It was she—a lover could not be mistaken; yet it was no longer the Egyptian loaded with jewels, but a Bedouin who had always lived in the tents. Leila was clad in a long blue cotton robe, which was gathered around the neck and fell to the feet. Over this robe was a red woollen bournous, which covered her head. Her black tresses, arranged in numerous small braids, each ending in a coral bead, fell to her eyes, and added to the softness and brilliancy of her glance. In this simple costume, with her head uncovered, and her feet bare, Leila was the queen of the desert. The delighted Bedouins saluted her as she passed, as fresh and smiling as the dawn.

They set out. A recent storm had revived nature; the grass, wet with dew, and the freshly opened flowers smiled on these happy hearts. Leila no longer hid

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herself in the back of the palanquin. Abdallah rode beside her, talking all the way, with his hand on the side of the litter. Cafour had never been more talkative and saucy.

"Oh, Abdallah," said Leila, "if you bear so hard on the side of the litter, you will overturn it and throw us both onto the ground."

"Well, let go the camel's rein, then; don't refuse me the pleasure of holding your hand."

"Ingrate!" cried Cafour; "you have quite forgotten me. So, black Bedouin, you are carrying off the wife of the Calif Moyawiah!" And, with a joyous voice, she struck up the Bedouin girl's song:¹

"Oh, take these purple robes away,
Give back my cloak of camel's hair,
And bear me from this towering pile
To where the black tents flap in air.
The camel's colt, with faltering tread,
The dog that all but barks at me,
Delight me more than ambling mules—
Than every art of minstrelsy.
And any cousin, poor but free,
Might take me, fatted ass, from thee."

They went on thus the whole day, unconscious of heat or fatigue. When joy follows sufferings, do we think of aught else than joy? Hafiz, besides, was there to lead the caravan, and Abdallah did not need to quit the treasure that the Bedouins were bringing back in triumph.

Night was approaching when they came in sight of the tents of the Beni Amurs. The sun was setting

¹ The song of the beautiful Bedouin girl Moyawiah is renowned among the Arabs. It may be found in Burton's "Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to El Medina and Mecca."

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behind the arch of an immense rainbow that spanned half the sky, a roseate light illumined the sands of the desert, and golden rays flashed their gleams on the summit of the granite pyramids. In the distance were heard the shrill cry of the sakhiah, the barking of dogs, and the cooing of the pigeons. Suddenly a piercing shout announced the return of the travelers.

"What cry is that?" asked Leila.

"It is my mother's voice," answered Abdallah, dismounting from his horse. "You will have two to love you."

Halima soon appeared, greatly astonished at the sight of so long a caravan. "What are these?" said she, pointing to the packages. "Has the son of Yusuf sold his horse and arms to turn merchant?"

"Yes, my mother," answered Abdallah; "and I bring you the rarest and choicest of wares, a daughter to respect and assist you."

Leila alighted from the litter and threw herself into the arms of Halima, who looked at her with astonishment, and asked the name of her father and tribe. She was not less surprised at the sight of Cafour, and, despite all Hafiz's speeches, returned to the tent with a sigh. She had little liking for a stranger woman. But when Abdallah came and seated himself by her side, after unloading the camels, and Leila hastened with a basin of warm water to wash her husband's feet herself, "God be praised," cried Halima; "this woman will be truly a handmaid unto her husband. My house has at last found a mistress; I can die in peace." And she tenderly embraced the daughter whom God had given her in his goodness.

"What is the matter, master?" said Cafour, who was lying at Abdallah's feet, with her head resting on her preserver's lap; "has the smoke of your pipe got into your eyes? You look as if you were crying. Oh,

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your pipe has gone out; will you have a coal to light it?"

"Hush! hush!" said the Bedouin, stroking the negress's head as if caressing a faithful dog. The child lay down again, at the same time jerking her mistress's arm so suddenly that Leila's forehead came in contact with Abdallah's lips. Cafour laughed at the success of her stratagem. Poor creature! to whom everything was denied, and who found means to be happy by placing her happiness in that of others.

CHAPTER XXIII.

KARA SHITAN.

Omar had returned to Djiddah with despair in his heart. It was in vain that his slaves tried to divert him; it was in vain that business and gold poured in on him from all sides; his passion consumed him. He passed whole days in his chamber, sitting cross-legged on a carpet, revolving impossible projects in his brain, and seeking for a vengeance which escaped him.

"Of what avail is my father's wish to me?" he cried. "Of what use is my health and the money that I have accumulated? Am I any the less, on that account, the most unhappy of men? That wretched Bedouin, in his poverty, triumphs over me. I am lonely and desolate in the midst of abundance. Accursed be life—accursed be my brother! The oracle has not deceived me; I am slain by my best friend." And he relapsed into his despair.

The grief of Omar was the talk of the whole city. If little love was left for the son of Mansour, on the other hand, his fortune was greatly esteemed. Was there not some service to offer or some consolation

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to sell him? it was asked. After such an insult, he would well reward whomsoever should avenge him on the Bedouin. Such words are not lost. It is the curse of the rich that there are those around them ready to enter the fires of hell in their behalf. The passions of the poor are flames which consume the heart, and then quickly die out; the passions of the rich are a brazier, fed by all about it, and giving forth conflagration, crime, and death.

One morning the son of Mansour received a visit from an Arnaut captain, who came, he said, on important business, that would suffer no delay. Omar received him politely, and ordered pipes and coffee to be served.

"Capital coffee!" said the captain, sipping it slowly; "as bitter as death, as black as Satan, and as hot as Hades. And what an exquisite mixture of nutmeg, cinnamon, and clove! What a fine thing it is to be rich! The world seems to move for you alone."

"Men are mistaken sometimes about the happiness of the rich," said Omar, sighing.

"Bah! a rich man in sorrow is a miser who knows not how to use his gold. If he loves a woman, let him buy her; if he wishes to be rid of a rival, let him sell his skin. Everything can be bought here on earth. With money, a man can have everything.

"To whom have I the honor of speaking?" asked the son of Mansour.

"My name is Kara Shitan," replied the stranger. "I am an Arnaut chief—one of those who attacked you in the desert. By killing my friend, Mohammed, your brother made me lose five thousand dours; pay me this sum, and I will rid you of Abdallah."

"A murder!" said Omar.

"Bah!" rejoined the captain, coldly; "if God had not invented death, it would not be long before we

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should eat each other. Away with false scruples! When an occasion offers, wisdom commands us not to let it slip. It is just to force our enemies to drink the bitter cup which they have made us taste; we are right in striking them with the weapon with which they were the first to wound us."

"My brother!" said Omar, in a hesitating tone.

"Your brother and your enemy. What matters his death to you? You will have no hand in it. I shall kill Abdallah like a dog if I find him in the desert; I shall avenge my own quarrel; only, in order to avenge myself, I must have five thousand duros."

"Of what use will your vengeance be to me?" said the son of Mansour.

"I know nothing about it," replied Kara Shitan; "I don't understand business as well as you do; but, if I were in your place, and Abdallah should disappear, I should find no trouble in gaining possession of the beautiful Leila. The Bedouin, it is said, has no family but his mother and an old dotard; a little courage and resolution will remove these obstacles. An abduction is an easy matter; Leila once a widow and in your house, it will not take long to console her. What is there to fear? The sherif? At Djiddah, men laugh at the anger of the Bedouins. The pacha? He is a man like the rest of us; he has a conscience, and we know its price."

"And the tribe—have you thought of that?"

"The tribe is nothing," said the captain. "I know that these Bedouins have as much rancor and malice as their camels; but blood can be bought as well as other things; money is not despised in the desert any more than anywhere else, and the Beni Amurs will console themselves with Abdallah's inheritance."

"Yes," returned Omar, "blood can be ransomed when the murder is involuntary. A hundred camels is

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the price of a man's blood; but there is no composition for murder, and I shall suffer death."

"The desert is mute," said the captain, "and dead men tell no tales. He who finds a shrivelled corpse among the sands must be shrewd indeed if he can distinguish a murder from an accident. But we will say no more about it," added he, rising. "What is the charming Leila, whom I have never beheld, to me? Let her love her Bedouin; let them be happy together and laugh at the son of Mansour—it is all the same to me. After all, Abdallah is a brave man, and I respect him; if you had inflicted on him the outrage which you have received, he would not haggle about the price of vengeance. Farewell."

"Stay," cried the son of Mansour; "you are right. While Abdallah lives there is no security for me on earth; it was predicted to me at my birth, and I feel it daily. Deliver me from this enemy. As to the cripple, I have an account to settle with him which I will attend to myself. Leila, you will cost me dear!"

"If you take my advice," resumed the captain, "we shall both strike at the same time. I will entice away Abdallah, never more to return, and you shall carry off the lady; all will be done in two hours, and the enemy overthrown even before he suspects the danger."

"So be it," said Omar; "but remember that I never wish to see your face again."

"That is very natural," replied Kara Shitan. "Tell me the day and hour, give me the five thousand dours and rely on my punctuality. My reputation is made; I would not fail to keep my word for the finest horses in Arabia."

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CHAPTER XXIV.

HOSPITALITY.

While avarice and hatred were plotting Abdallah's death, the son of Yusuf was enjoying his happiness without dreaming of a cloud in the horizon. Could he suspect that he had an enemy when his soul was so pure and his heart so free from bitterness? He who loves and is beloved looks upon all men as his brethren. For a month he had been intoxicated with joy and tenderness, with no other care than that of admiring Leila and thanking God for having blessed his house.

In one of those hot, misty mornings which precede a storm, Abdallah was reposing in his garden in the shade of the citron-trees. Cafour carelessly lay at his feet, her eyes fixed on him like a dog watching for an order or glance. At the back of the ten Halima was baking loaves in the ashes, while Leila, seated before a loom, was embroidering gold and silver lozenges on her husband's bournous. The son of Yusuf abandoned himself to the happiness of living surrounded by all whom he loved. The barking of the dogs roused him from his reverie. A man had stopped his camel at the garden gate and was stretching out his hand to the young Bedouin. Leila disappeared, and Abdallah went to meet the stranger.

"Welcome," said he; "thy arrival brings us the blessing of God. The house and all it contains are thine; thou art the master thereof."

"Son of Yusuf," answered the stranger, "I will not set foot on the ground till thou hast sworn to render me the service of which I am in need."

"Speak," said Abdallah; "thou art a guest—thy word is a command."

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"I am a poor merchant from Syria," resumed the stranger. "I have been to Mecca on business. Yesterday I was drawn into a quarrel in the Holy City with a Beni Motayr, and had the misfortune to kill my adversary. His family and friends are pursuing me; I have no one to defend me; if I cannot reach the noble Medina, I am lost. You alone, it is said, can conduct me thither in safety; my life is in your hands—decide my fate."

"Enter my tent," replied the son of Yusuf. "In two hours we will set out."

"Remember," said the merchant, "that I trust myself to you alone."

"I alone will accompany you," returned Abdallah; "I answer for your safety on my head."

No sooner had the stranger been brought into the tent and confided to the care of Halima than the young Bedouin went out to prepare for departure. Cafour stopped him on the way. "Do you know this man?" said she.

"No; what matters it? It was God that sent him hither."

"He is not a merchant; I have seen his pistols—they are too handsome; he is a soldier; beware of him."

"Soldier or merchant, what have I to fear from a stranger and a fugitive?" returned Abdallah. "Make haste and prepare supper; I have only time to tell Leila of the journey."

When the son of Yusuf returned to his guest, Cafour had spread the table with unleavened bread, pressed dates, boiled rice, new milk and cold water. She bustled about him and gazed at him earnestly, trying to recall where she had seen his face, which seemed familiar to her. The stranger was perfectly calm and indifferent. In her anxiety, she determined to arouse him and break the charm that hid the danger. Seizing

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an earthen vase she placed herself behind the pretended merchant, and threw it on the ground, shivering it in pieces. The stranger looked angrily around.

"The Arnaut!" cried she, looking at her master.

"Begone," said Abdallah, "and do not trouble me with your follies."

Cafour glided to a corner of the tent, and soon returned with boiling tea. The stranger was perfectly tranquil; the word Arnaut had not moved him.

"My guest," said Abdallah, "welcome to this poor table. The journey will be long, and it is good to strengthen yourself against the fatigue to come. Satisfy your hunger."

"Excuse me," replied the merchant; "my anxiety and fatigue have given me a fever, and I have but one desire, to set out on my way."

"Salt is good for the appetite," said Cafour, and, taking a handful of salt, she thrust it into the stranger's mouth and fled into the garden.

"Wretch!" cried Abdallah, "I will chastise your insolence," as he rushed furiously after Cafour to punish her.

"Strike," said Cafour, weeping, "strike the dog that warns you, and caress the jackal that will devour you. Did you not hear the dogs howl this morning? they saw Azrael. Madman, your sins blind you; death is hovering over this house. Do you not know that merchant?"

"A guest is above suspicion," interrupted Abdallah; and, returning to the tent, he found the stranger seated in the same place, with a smile on his lips.

"The slave has given me a lesson in politeness," said he. "The beard of the guest is in the hand of the master of the tent; I will endeavor to do honor to your hospitality." He fell to eating with an excellent appe-

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tite for a sick man, talking freely, and seeking every means to be agreeable to Abdallah.

At the moment of departure, when the stranger was already mounted, Leila came out, with her face half concealed in her bournous, holding a pitcher in her hand, from which she sprinkled a few drops of water on the feet and haunches of the camel. "May God give thee a good journey," said she, "and conduct thee back in safety to those who love and watch for thee."

"Those who love me are under ground," answered the stranger; "and since I lost my mother, twenty years ago, no one has watched for me."

"Then may God give thee a wife to love thee and grow old by thy side."

"Let us go," said the stranger, abruptly; "the moments are numbered."

"My lord," said Leila to her husband, "thou bearest happiness away with thee; mayest thou soon bring it back again!"

Cafour was by Abdallah's side. "Master," said she, "don't you take your gun?"

"No, it would be an insult to him whom I accompany. Fear nothing; he whom God guards is well guarded. When my uncle returns from the fields, tell him to watch over the tent. Next to God, it is to him that I trust you."

And, taking his lance in his hand, Abdallah set out on his way, walking by the side of the stranger's camel. Halima and Leila followed the travelers with their eyes as long as they could see them, then returned to the tent. Cafour alone remained outside, with fixed gaze and trembling heart. It seemed to her that the horizon was about to open and the desert to give back the master for whom she watched. Vain hope of an anxious soul! Night fell on the earth without bringing Abdallah.

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CHAPTER XXV.

THE GOLDEN LEAF.

No sooner had they plunged into the sands than the stranger looked around him to be certain that he was alone, and began to play with the handle of his pistol.

"I hope, my dear guest," said Abdallah, "that you will pardon the folly of that child who disturbed your repose."

"If the slave had been mine, I should have punished her severely," answered the traveler.

"We should be indulgent to those who love us," returned Abdallah. "Cafour thought me threatened with some great danger; it was to save me from this imaginary peril that she involuntarily offended you. By forcing you to eat my salt she has made us friends for life and death. Is not this the case among you Syrians?"

"In my tribe," said the stranger, "the obligation lasts for one day. But if the second day passes without partaking of the same dish, the salt loses its virtue, and we are free to hate each other."

"Well, my guest, replied Abdallah, smiling, "you shall kill me to-morrow after I have saved your life. Until then I am in your keeping; it is your duty to protect me against all men."

"So I will," returned the stranger—then was silent. "These are strange words," thought he. "The Bedouin is right; I cannot kill him while the salt of hospitality is still in my stomach—it would be a crime. I will wait till evening. When the sun sets another day will begin, and I shall have the right to do as I like."

All along the way he gazed at Abdallah, who went

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on with an erect head and calm brow. The Bedouin's pistols were not loaded, and if he carried a lance in his hand, it was only to aid him in walking.

"This man's confidence hampers me," said the stranger to himself. "I would gladly fell an enemy; I cannot slaughter a sheep. Five thousand dours for such a task is not enough; I would rather kill that dog of an Omar for half the price."

When the sun was near setting, the merchant urged on his camel in order to prepare his weapons without being seen by Abdallah; then, hiding his arms under his bournous, he paused. "Well," thought he, "the moment has come."

As he turned round, the son of Yusuf approached him, seized the camel by the bridle, and thrusting his lance into the ground, spread two carpets on the sand. "My brother," said he, "this is the hour of prayer. The keblah is before us, and if we have no water for our ablutions, you know that the Prophet permits us to use the sand of the desert."

"I have no time to waste here; let us go on," cried the stranger.

"Art thou not a Mussulman?" said Abdullah, looking at him with a threatening air.

"There is no god but God, and Mohammed is his prophet," the merchant hastened to reply. "But the religion of a poor pilgrim like me is simpler than that of a noble Bedouin. I do not pray, because all that God does he does well; I do not wash my face, because I need the water of the desert to drink; I do not give alms, because I ask them; I do not fast in the month of Ramadan, because I famish with hunger all the year round; and I do not go on pilgrimages, because the whole earth is the house of God. This is my faith; so much the worse for those who are too nice to like it."

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"You surprise me, my dear guest," resumed the son of Yusuf. "I had a different opinion of you. Do you not wear, like myself, an amulet on your arm, to drive away the temptations of the evil spirit? Do you not know that it contains the two saving chapters?"

"Yes, I wear a talisman," said the stranger. "My mother gave it to me twenty years ago on her dying bed. It is the only thing that I respect; more than once it has turned aside the death that was whistling about me."

"Have you forgotten the words that make the virtue of this treasure?"

"I have never troubled myself about them; my mother chose them for me; she knew that of which I am ignorant."

"Harken to them," said Abdallah, solemnly. "When a man lives in the midst of these sands which may overwhelm him at a breath, it is good to draw nigh by prayer to him who alone rules the danger."

And, bending towards Mecca, the son of Yusuf repeated, with emotion, the chapter of the Koran entitled the

DAYBREAK.

"In the name of the clement and merciful God,
Say, I fly for refuge unto the Lord of the Daybreak;
From the mischief of the beings whom he has created;
From the mischief of the night when it cometh on;
From the mischief of the envious, who bear us envy."

"Peace be upon thee!" cried the merchant. "Are those the words which my mother left me?" and, while listening to Abdallah, he replaced the pistols in his belt.

The son of Yusuf continued to recite the Koran:

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MEN.

"In the name of the clement and merciful God,
Say, I fly for refuge unto the Lord of men,
The King of men,
The God of men;
From the mischief of him who suggests evil thoughts
and slyly withdraweth,
Who whispers evil into the hearts of men—
From genii and men."

"Who says this?" asked the stranger. "Who reads thus the heart?"

"It is God himself," replied Abdallah; "we are his. If he wishes our destruction, our feet lead us where death awaits us. If he wishes our safety, death falls before us like a wounded lion. He saved Abraham in the midst of the flames; he drew Jonah from the depths of the sea and the belly of the whale."

"Then do you never fear death?"

"No. Where God commands, all precautions are vain. There are two days in our life when it is useless to arm ourselves against death—the day when God orders Azrael to strike us, and the day when he forbids him to approach us."

"May we not still fear the unknown hour that is destined to carry us away?"

"No, not if we have followed the Word of God. Your mother doubtless told you more than once what mine has often repeated to me, 'Remember that on the day of thy birth thou alone wept, while all around thee rejoiced. Live so that at thy last moment all around thee may be in tears, while thou alone hast no tears to shed; then thou wilt not fear death, whatever may be the hour of its coming.'"

"You dwellers in the desert are a strange people,"

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murmured the stranger; "your words are golden, but your acts are evil." And he involuntarily carried his hand to his pistol.

"We are the people of the Prophet," returned the Bedouin; "we follow his teachings. Before ever you set foot in my tent," he continued, raising his voice, "I knew you, Kara Shitan. You are my enemy; you came to my dwelling under a false name; I know not the end of your journey, and nothing would have been easier than for me to rid myself of you; but you demanded my hospitality; God placed you under my keeping, and this is why I have accompanied you, alone and unarmed. If you have evil thoughts, may God protect me; if not, give me your hand."

"May hell be my inheritance if I touch him who has spared me!" said Kara Shitan. "Here is my hand; it is that of a soldier who returns evil for evil, and good for good."

No sooner had the Arnaut uttered the words than he began to regret them. "Here I have allowed myself to be trifled with like a child," thought he. "Shall I give back the five thousand dours? No; Omar is rich enough to pay his brother's debt. Besides, have I not rid him of Abdallah? If his heart has not failed him, Leila by this time is on the way to Djiddah. If he undertakes to complain, let him come for his dours; I have promised to kill someone—I give him the preference." At this happy thought, Kara Shitan laughed to himself, and admired his own wit.

An instant after he was seized with remorse. "It is not natural," thought he, "for me to give way to such weakness. Who will now ask my aid? I am like an old lion without teeth or claws. That young woman who spoke to me so gently, this Bedouin who trusts in me, the voice of my mother which seems to rise from the tomb—all this is magic. Accursed amulet, thou

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hast destroyed me!" and he snatched the talisman from his arm.

"Captain," said Abdallah, "we must plunge into the desert if you would not meet the caravan which we see yonder on the way to the noble Medina."

"No," said Kara Shitan; "on the contrary, I shall join it; I need you no longer. What shall I give you to show my gratitude? Here, take this talisman. You know not what you owe it; you know not what it costs me. Farewell; if you hear me called a coward, remember that I have been your guest and your friend."

And, urging on his camel, he rode off, leaving Abdallah surprised by these strange words, the meaning of which escaped him.

Left alone, the son of Yusuf endeavored to fasten the protecting amulet about his arm. It was a little roll of parchment, wound around with a silken thread. On one side was sewed a bit of velvet, to which something resembling a golden bee was attached. Abdallah uttered a cry of joy; he could not be mistaken; it was the third leaf—the shamrock was complete. The son of Yusuf had nothing more to seek for on earth; the diamond leaf awaited him in heaven.

With a soul overflowing with gratitude, Abdallah prostrated himself on the earth, and, in a voice full of emotion, recited the Fát-háh:

"In the name of the clement and merciful God,
Praise be to God, the Lord of the universe,
The clement and merciful,
The King of the day of judgment,
Thee alone do we worship, and of thee alone do we
beg assistance.
Direct us in the right way,

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In the way of those whom thou hast loaded with thy blessings,
Not of those who have incurred thy wrath, nor of those who go astray,
Amen, Lord of the angels, of the genii, and of men."

The prayer finished, Abdallah turned his face homeward with a light heart and joyous tread. A new thought had entered his brain—a thought which was a new happiness in itself. Was it certain that the diamond leaf had fallen within the gates of Paradise? Did not these three leaves, reunited from different parts of the globe, cry out for their sister? Could a blessing of God remain imperfect? Why might not a new effort, a more entire devotion to the divine will, obtain the highest prize for which Abdallah's heart sighed?

Intoxicated with this hope, the son of Yusuf walked on without thinking of the length and fatigue of the journey, and the darkness alone forced him to stop. The sky was lowering, and the moon did not rise till near morning. Wrapped in his bournous, the Bedouin threw himself at the foot of a tree, and quickly fell asleep. But his thoughts did not quit the divine shamrock; he saw it in his dreams; then the leaves grew and assumed a human form; Leila, Hafiz, Halima, and poor Cafour, hand in hand, formed the mysterious plant, and enriched him with their smiles and love. "To-morrow, my loved ones, to-morrow we shall meet again!" murmured he.

"Verily, the knowledge of the hour of judgment is with God. No soul knoweth what it shall gain on the morrow, neither doth any soul know in what land it shall die; but God is knowing, and fully acquainted with all things."

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CHAPTER XXVI.

THE RETURN.

When the son of Yusuf awakened, the moon was shedding her gentle light on the earth, and the breeze of the morning was already felt. The impatient traveler quickened his steps, and, on mounting a small rising ground, he saw the tents of his tribe in the distance by the first beams of daylight. In front of them, and nearer him, was his own dwelling; he had waited for autumn before removing from the garden he had planted, the bower in which Leila took delight.

At the sight of his people Abdallah paused to take breath and enjoy the spectacle before his eyes. The first sounds of the morning were succeeding the calmness of the night. A few women were already on their way to the well, with their pitchers on their heads; the camels were stretching out their long necks and braying; and the sheep were bleating in their folds for the shepherd. Around Abdallah's tent all was silent; there was neither sound nor movement in the garden. "My uncle is growing old," thought the Bedouin; "there is great need of me at home. What happiness to surprise them all! Who would have thought once that a day's absence would seem so long to me!"

As he descended the hill a horse ran past him at full gallop—it was Hamama. He called her; the frightened mare fled toward the Bedouin village; for the first time she did not hear the voice of her master.

"Who has untied Hamama?" thought Abdallah. "What has frightened her? It is some new prank of Cafour's. Why haven't they kept better guard?"

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He entered the garden, the gate of which was open. At the sound of his steps the dogs came out of the tent, but, instead of running to meet him, they set up a mournful howl. "God is great!" exclaimed the son of Yusuf. "Misfortune has entered my dwelling."

In a moment he felt the bitterness of death. He tried to go on, but his knees bent beneath him, and a cloud passed before his eyes. He tried to call out, but his words choked him. At last, with a desperate effort, "My uncle, my mother, Lelia, Cafour, where are you?" shouted he.

There was no answer. The doves were cooing among the branches, the bees were humming around the last remaining flowers, the water was rippling over the pebbles; everything was living in the garden—the tent was mute and lifeless. Abdallah dragged himself from one clump of trees to another; then his strength returned, and the blood mounted to his cheeks. He staggered onward like a drunken man.

The tent was empty, the furniture overturned, and a table broken; there had been a struggle. The curtain of the apartment of the women was down. Abdallah ran thither. As he entered he stumbled over a corpse—it was Hafiz. The old man was stretched on his back, his teeth shut, his mouth covered with foam, and his features contracted with rage. His hands were clenched. In the left he held a shred of blue cotton stuff—it was the robe of Leila; in the right a piece of scarlet cloth, torn doubtless from the ravisher. Brave Hafiz! The cowards had not dared attack him face to face, but had assassinated him from behind while he was defending Leila.

Abdallah fell on his knees by the side of his uncle and closed his eyes. "God grant thee mercy!" said he; "may He be as good to thee as thou wert to us!" He rose without shedding a tear and walked with a firm

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step toward the village; but his limbs failed him on the way, and he was forced to lean against a palm-tree for support. Taking his pistols from his girdle, he fired them in the air. At the sound the Bedouins ran from all sides. Men and women surrounded Abdallah, who stood pale, with frenzied eyes and trembling limbs. "Here you are," he cried, "brave warriors, Beni Armurs, kings of the desert! Oh, sons of Jews, hearts of women, cowards, the curses of God fall upon your heads!" And for the first time he wept.

A cry of rage answered his words. "He is mad," cried one of the old men. "Respect him whose soul is with God. Come, my child," added he, taking Abdallah's hand; "calm yourself; what is the matter?"

"What is the matter?" cried the young man. "This night, in my absence, Hafiz has been killed, my mother has been carried off; all that I loved has been snatched from me. And you—you were asleep—you heard nothing. Curses on you. To me the misfortune; to you the outrage and infamy!"

At the first words of Abdallah the women had rushed toward the tent, where they were heard moaning and weeping. The sheik cast down his head.

"Who would have thought of watching over your family when your uncle and brother were there to protect them?" said he.

"My brother! Impossible!"

"Your brother came here last evening with six slaves," said a Bedouin. "I knew the little merchant; I helped Hafiz kill a sheep for the supper of his guests."

The son of Yusuf hid his face in his hands, then looked at his companions, and said in a faint voice, "Come and see what my brother has done, and advise me what to do."

"Advice is easy," replied the sheik. "After an out-

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rage there is but one thought for him who has a soul—vengeance! You are a finger of our hand; whoever touches you wounds us; whoever seeks your life seeks ours. Omar has a few hours the start of us, but with God's aid we will kill him before night. Come, my brave men," he added, "saddle your horses, and take a double ration of water; the weather is lowering, and the skins dry fast. Let us go."

Before mounting his horse, Abdallah wished to see his uncle once more. The women had already surrounded the corpse and commenced their lamentations. "Oh, my father, my only friend!" cried the Bedouin, "thou knowest why I leave thee. Either I will never more enter this dwelling, or thou shalt be avenged."

The Beni Amurs followed the son of Yusuf. The sheik gazed long at old Hafiz; then, raising his hand, "Accursed be he who returns to his wife till he has stricken down the enemy!" said he. "Woe to him who has insulted us; before this night we will fling his corpse to the eagles and jackals. The whole earth shall know whether the Beni Amurs are brethren who cling together or children with whom men can trifle with impunity."

CHAPTER XXVII.

LEILA.

The band set out amid the cries of the women and shouts of vengeance. Once in the desert, all was silent, each making ready his arms and watching the horizon. It was not difficult to follow the caravan; the wind had not yet effaced the footprints of the camels, all of which pointed toward Djiddah. Abdallah, always in advance, counted the minutes, and called God to his aid; but, however much he strained

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his gaze, he saw naught but solitude. The air was burning, the heavens were heavy with the coming storm. The horses, panting and covered with sweat, advanced at a slow pace. The son of Yusuf sighed; vengeance seemed escaped him.

At length he perceived a black speck in the distance—it was the caravan. It had felt the approach of the storm, and had taken refuge near those Red Rocks known so well to Abdallah. "My friends, we have them," cried he. "Here they are! God has delivered them into our hands. Forward!" And each one, forgetting fatigue, spurred his horse on the ravishers.

In these endless plains it is not easy to surprise an enemy that stands on his guard. Omar soon recognized his pursuers, and did not wait for them. He ranged the camels in line, and placed a few drivers behind them to feign a defence, then mounted a horse and fled with the rest of the band into the desert.

The Bedouins came up. At the first discharge Omar's camel-drivers gave way and fled among the rocks. Before the smoke was cleared away a woman ran to meet Abdallah; it was Halima, who had been left behind and had escaped her enemies.

"Blessed be thou, my son!" she cried. "Do not stop! Give chase to that negro with the red jacket; he is the assassin of Hafiz and the kidnapper of Leila. Avenge us—eye for eye, tooth for tooth, life for life! Death to traitors! Death to murderers!"

At these cries Hamama rushed over the sands with the swiftness of a torrent, as if sharing in her master's passion. The Bedouins had great difficulty in keeping their companion in sight. As for Abdallah, rage made him forget danger. "Cowards!" cried he to the accomplices of Omar, "where would you flee when God pursues you?" and with drawn sabre he passed amid the bullets, his eye fixed on the negro who was

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carrying off Leila. The pursuer and pursued soon left the rest of the party behind. The Ethiopian, mounted on a fleet horse, sped like an arrow through the air, while Abdallah followed close behind. Hamama gained ground; vengeance was approaching. Leila, placed in front and held by a powerful arm, called her husband, writhing in the stifling embrace, and vainly struggling against the terrible rider. Suddenly she seized the bridle and gave it a jerk, which disturbed the horse, and caused him to stop for an instant. "Curses on you!" cried the negro; "I am lost. Let go the bridle, or I shall be killed!"

"Here, my beloved!" cried Leila, clinging to the bridle, despite threats and blows, with the energy of despair.

She was saved. The son of Yusuf fell like a thunderbolt on the ravisher, when suddenly the frightened Hamama sprang aside with a bound that would have thrown any other than her rider. A heavy mass had fallen at her feet. Abdallah heard a groan which chilled him to the heart. Without thinking of the flying enemy, he leaped to the ground and raised the unhappy Leila, pale and bleeding, with distorted features. A deep wound was gaping in her throat, and her eyes were sightless. "Leila, my love, speak to me!" cried Abdallah, clasping his wife to his heart, while he tried to stanch the gaping wound from which her life-blood was ebbing. Leila no longer heard him. He seated himself on the sand with his precious burden, and, taking Leila's hand, raised one finger in the air. "My child," said he, "repeat with me, 'There is no god but God, and Mohammed in his prophet.' Answer me, I entreat you; it is your husband—it is Abdallah that calls you."

At this name Leila started; her eyes sought him whom she loved, and her lips half opened; then her

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head fell on Abdallah's shoulder like the head of a dying hare on the shoulder of the hunter.

When the Beni Amurs joined the son of Yusuf they found him motionless in the same place, holding his wife in his arms and gazing in her face, which seemed to smile on him. They surrounded their companion in silence, and more than one wept.

At the sight of the corpse Halima uttered a cry of anguish, and threw herself on her son's neck; then, suddenly rising, "Are we avenged?" said she. "Is Omar dead? Is the negro slain?"

"See those crowds gathering yonder," said one of the Bedouins. "There is the murderer of Hafiz. Omar has escaped us, but the simoon is rising; it will overtake him before he can escape from the desert, and before an hour the sand will serve as his winding sheet."

"My son, summon up your courage," said Halima. "Our enemy still lives; leave tears to women. Leave us to bury the dead; go, punish the traitor. God will go with you."

These words reanimated Abdallah. "God is great!" he cried. "You are right, my mother—to you the tears, and to me the vengeance."

He rose and placed Leila in his mother's arms; then, gazing at her pale face with infinite tenderness, "Peace be with thee, daughter of my soul," he said, in a slow and grave voice. "Peace be with thee, who are now in the presence of the Lord. Receive what has been promised thee. It is God that raises us up; it is God that casts us down; it is God that gives us life; it is God that sends us death. If it pleases God, we shall soon join thee. O God, forgive him, and forgive us!"

He raised his hands to heaven, murmured the Fátáh, and, passing his hand over his brow, embraced his mother and mounted his horse.

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"Where are you going?" said a sheik. "Do you not see that fiery cloud advancing? We have barely time to reach the Red Rocks. Death is yonder!"

"Farewell," answered Abdallah. "There is no more rest for me except in the shadow of death."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

VENGEANCE.

Scarcely had the son of Yusuf quitted his friends when he found himself before a corpse; it was the negro, already covered with birds of prey. "God hates the treacherous," murmured the Bedouin; "he will deliver the son of Mansour into my hand."

The whirlwind was approaching; the sky was of a milky white; the rayless sun looked like a burning millstone; and a poisonous blast dried up the saliva in the throat and melted the marrow of the bones. A noise was heard in the distance like that of an angry sea; whirlwinds of red dust rose from the sand, and mounted in columns to the sky, like giants with faces of fire and arms of vapor. Everywhere there was a desolation, everywhere an implacable heat and at moments a silence even more horrible than the moaning of the simoon.

Over this land, parched with drought, Hamama advanced slowly, with panting breath and palpitating sides. Her master had the tranquillity of a man that knows neither hope nor fear. He felt neither heat nor thirst; one thought alone ruled his body and soul—to overtake the assassin and kill him.

After an hour's march he saw a horse stretched on the sand. A little farther on he heard something like a sigh. He approached the spot. A man lay in the dust, perishing with thirst, and without strength to

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utter a cry. It was the son of Mansour. His eyes were starting from his head, his mouth was wide open, and his hands were pressed to his panting chest. Delirious with pain, he did not recognize Abdallah; all that he could do was to carry his fingers to his parched throat. "Yes, you shall have water," said the Bedouin; "not in this way shall you die."

He dismounted from his horse, took a skin of water from the saddle-bow, and, after throwing away Omar's pistols and sabre, put it to the lips of the dying man. Omar drank deeply of the water, which restored his life, and found himself face to face with Abdallah.

"You have saved me," murmured he. "I recognize your inexhaustible goodness. You are a brother to those who have no brothers, a life-giving dew to the unfortunate."

"Son of Mansour, you must die," said the young man.

"Pardon, my brother!" cried the merchant, recovering the consciousness of danger; "you have not saved my life to put me to death! Pardon, in the name of what is dearest to you on earth—pardon, in the name of her who nourished us both."

"Halima curses you," returned Abdallah. "You must die."

Terrified at the sinister air of the Bedouin, Omar fell on his knees. "My brother, I acknowledge my guilt," said he. "I have deserved your anger; but, however great my fault, can I not redeem it? Take all my fortune; be the richest man in Arabia."

"You have killed Hafiz—you have killed Leila; you must die," said Abdallah.

"Leila dead!" exclaimed the son of Mansour, bursting into tears; "it cannot be. Her blood be on her murderer's head; I am not guilty of it. Spare me, Abdallah; have pity on me."

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"As well implore the gates of the tomb," replied the son of Yusuf. "Make haste," he added, drawing his sabre. "May God give you patience to endure the affliction he sends you."

"At least, my brother," returned Omar, in a voice of emotion, "give me time for a last prayer. You would not have the angel of death seize me before I have implored the mercy of God?"

"Say your prayers," replied Abdallah.

The merchant unrolled his turban and spread it before him; then, throwing his robe over his shoulders and bowing his head, he awaited the death-blow.

"God is great!" he murmured; "there is no strength nor power but in God. To him we belong; to him we must return. O God! sovereign of the day of retribution, deliver me from the fires of hell; have pity on me."

Abdallah gazed on him, weeping. "It must be," he said to himself—"it must be;" yet his heart failed him. This wretch was his brother; he had loved him—he still loved him. When love has once entered the soul, it lodges there like a ball in the flesh; tear it out if you will, the wound still remains. In vain the son of Yusuf sought to rouse his courage by calling to mind the images of his slaughtered uncle and dying wife; despite himself, he could see nothing but the happy days of childhood, Halima clasping both her children to her breast, and old Hafiz taking them in his arms to tell them of his adventures in battle. The pleasures they had shared, the sorrows they had had in common, all these sweet recollections rose from the past to protect the son of Mansour. Strange to say, the victims themselves appeared to ask pardon for the assassin. "He is thy brother, and defenceless," said the old soldier. "He is thy brother," cried Leila, in tears; "do not slay him." "No, no," murmured the young man, repulsing the be-

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loved phantoms, "it must be. Not to punish crime is to betray justice."

In spite of the trouble of the son of Mansour, Abdallah's hesitation did not escape his keen eye. Bathed in tears, he clasped the knees of his judge. "Oh, my brother," he said, "do not add thy iniquity to mine. Remember what Abel said to his brother when threatened by him: 'If thou stretchest forth thine hand to slay me, I will not stretch forth mine hand against thee to slay thee, for I fear God, the lord of all creatures.' Alas! my folly has been greater than that of Cain. Thou hast a right to kill me; my life is too little to expiate the crime to which I have been led by my passions. But the forgiving God loves those who follow his example; he has promised indulgence to those who remember him; leave me to repent. He has promised a paradise whose breadth equalleth the heavens and the earth to those who bridle their anger; pardon me that God may show thee mercy, for God loveth the beneficent."

"Rise!" said Abdallah; "thy words have saved thee. Vengeance belongs to God alone. Let the Lord be thy judge; I will not dip my hands in the blood of him whom my mother has nursed."

"Wilt thou abandon me here?" said Omar, looking round him anxiously; "it would be more cruel than to slay me."

For his sole answer, Abdallah pointed to Hamama. Omar sprang on the mare, and, without turning his head, buried his spurs in her flanks and disappeared.

"Well," thought he, as he rode through the billows of sand upheaved by the wind, "if I escape the simoon I am saved from the peril predicted me. This Abdallah is very imprudent to remain in the desert in such weather, alone, without a horse, and without water."

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No matter; his folly be on his own head. I will forget these accursed Bedouins, who have never brought me anything but misfortune. The time has come at last to live for myself."

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE DIAMOND LEAF.

The wicked laugheth in his heart at his success, and saith, "I am cunning, and cunning is the queen of the world." The just submitteth to whatever may befall him, and saith, lifting his hands to heaven, "O Lord, thou causest to err whom thou pleasest, and directest whom thou pleasest; thou art the mighty, and the wise; what thou doest is well done."

Abdallah turned his steps homeward with profound sadness. His soul was still troubled; he had expelled its anger, but could not uproot its grief. Large tears trickled down his face, while he made vain efforts to check them. "Forgive me, O Lord," he cried; "be indulgent to the weakness of a heart that cannot submit. The prophet has said, 'The eyes are made for tears and for the flesh of affliction.' Glory to him who holdeth dominion over all things in his hands! May he give me strength to endure what he has willed!"

He walked on thus in prayer amid the sands and the fiery whirlwinds; heat and fatigue soon forced him to stop. The blood in his veins was turned to fire; a strange disorder troubled his brain, and he was no longer the master either of his senses or thoughts. Devoured with a burning thirst, at moments both sight and hearing deserted him; then he saw in the distance gardens full of verdure and lakes bordered with flowers; the wind whistled through the trees, and a

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spring gushed from among the grass. At this refreshing sight he dragged himself toward these enchanting waters. Vain illusion! gardens and running springs all vanished at his approach; there was naught about him but sand and fire. Exhausted and breathless, Abdallah felt that his last hour was approaching. "There is no god but God, and Mohammed is his prophet," he cried. "It is written that I shall depart from this place. O Lord, come to my aid; remove far from me the horrors of death!"

He knelt and washed his face with the sand of the desert; then, drawing his sabre, began to dig his own tomb.

As he began to stir the earth, it suddenly seemed to him that the simoon had vanished. The horizon lighted up with a glow softer than the dawn, and the clouds slowly opened like the curtains of a tent. Was it the mirage? None can tell; but Abdallah stood mute with surprise and admiration. Before him bloomed a vast garden, watered by brooks flowing in all directions. Trees with trunks of gold, leaves of emerald, and fruits of topaz and ruby, covered broad lawns, enamelled with strange flowers, with their luxuriant shade. Beautiful youths, clad in green satin and adorned with costly jewels, reclined on magnificent cushions and carpets, looking lovingly at each other, and drinking from silver cups that water, whiter than milk and sweeter than honey, which quencheth the thirst forever. By the side of the youths stood enchanting maidens, with large black eyes and modest mien. Created of the light, and, like it, transparent, their grace ravished the eyes and the heart; their face shone with a softer luster than the moon emerging from the clouds. In this kingdom of delights and peace, these happy couples were smiling and conversing, while lovely children, eternally young, sur-

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rounded them like strings of pearl, each holding a vase more sparkling than crystal, and pouring out for the blessed that inexhaustible liquor which never intoxicates, and the taste of which is more delicious than the fragrance of the pink. In the distance was heard the angel Israfil, the most melodious of the creatures of God. The houris joined their enchanting voices to the notes of the angel, and the very trees rustled their leaves, and celebrated the divine praise with a harmony exceeding all that man has ever dreamed.

While Abdallah admired these marvels in silence, an angel descended toward him; not the terrible Azrael, but the messenger of celestial favors, the good and lovely Gabriel. He held in his hand a tiny diamond leaf; but, small as it was, it shed a light that illumined the whole desert. His soul intoxicated with joy, the son of Yusuf ran to meet the angel. He paused in terror; at his feet was a vast gulf, full of fire and smoke, bridged only by an immense arch made of a blade of steel, which was finer than a hair and sharper than a razor.

The Bedouin was already seized with despair, when he felt himself supported and urged on by an invisible power. Hafiz and Leila were on either side of him. He did not see them; he dared not turn for fear of awakening; but he felt their presence, he heard their soothing words; both supported and carried him along with them. "In the name of the clement and merciful God!" he cried. At these words, which are the key to Paradise, he was transported, like lightning, to the other side of the bridge. The angel was there, holding out the mysterious flower. The young man seized it. At last the four-leaved shamrock was his, the ardor of desire was quenched, the veil of the body was lifted, the hour of recompense had struck. Gabriel turned his eyes toward the bottom of the garden, where

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divine majesty was enthroned. Abdallah's glance followed that of the angel, and the eternal splendor flashed in his face. At this luster, which no eye can endure, he fell with his face to the ground, uttering a loud cry.

This cry man's ear has never heard, man's voice has never repeated. The delirious joy of the shipwrecked mariner who escapes the fury of the waves, the delight of the bridegroom who presses his beloved to the first time to his heart, the transports of the mother who finds the son for whom she has wept—all the joys of earth are naught but mourning and sorrow to the cry of happiness which rose from the soul of Abdallah.

At this voice, repeated afar by the echoes, the earth resumed the beauty of its days of innocence and blossomed with the flowers of Paradise; the sky, bluer than sapphire, seemed to smile upon the earth; then gradually silence fell on all things, the heavens darkened, and the whirlwind regained dominion of the desert.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE HAPPINESS OF OMAR.

On re-entering his house at Djiddah, the son of Mansour experienced the joy of a criminal escaped from death; he shut himself up to regain his composure, and again viewed his wealth and handled his gold; it was his life and his power! Did not his treasures give him the means to subjugate men and the right to despise them?

Nevertheless, the pleasure of Omar was not unmixed; there was still more than one danger in perspective. If Abdallah reached home, might not he regret his clemency? If he should die in the desert,

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would he not have an avenger? Might not the sheriff think himself offended? Might not the pacha set an extortionate price on his protection? The son of Mansour drove away these importunate thoughts. "Why be terrified," thought he, "when the most imminent peril is past, thanks to my address? Am I at the end of my resources? My real enemies have fallen; shall I not overcome the others? Life is a treasure that diminishes daily; what folly to waste it in vain anxieties! How difficult it is to be perfectly happy here on earth!"

These reasonable fears were followed by other cares which astonished the son of Mansour. In spite of himself, he thought of old Hafiz whom he had murdered; nor could he put aside the remembrance of Leila, or of his brother dying in the desert, the victim of a generous devotion.

"Away with these foolish imaginings, that whiten the beard before the time!" cried he. "What weakness to think of such things! Can I change destiny? If old Hafiz is no more, it is because his time had come. On the day that Abdallah was born, his death was written before God. Why shall I, therefore, trouble myself? Am I not rich? I buy the conscience of others; I will buy repose for my own heart."

It was in vain for him to try; his soul was like the restless ocean, which, unable to appease its angry waves, casts up mire and foam upon the shore. "I must gain time," he thought; "these feelings are nothing but a remnant of agitation, which fools call remorse, but which is nothing but a little fatigue and feverishness. I know how to cure it. I have a wine of Shiraz which has more than once consoled me! why not seek patience and forgetfulness therein?"

He went to his harem, and called a Persian slave with an enchanting voice—a heretic, who was not shocked at the use of the cup, and who poured out with

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infernal grace this poison accursed by all true Mussulmans.

"How pale you are, master!" said she, on seeing the discomposed features of the son of Mansour.

"It is the fatigue from a long journey," answered Omar. "Pour me some wine, and sing me one of the songs of your country, to drive away care and bring back mirth."

The slave brought two crystal cups set in gold, which she filled with a liquor as yellow as gold and as clear as amber; then, taking a tambourine, she struck it alternately with her hand and elbow, and waved it over her head, while she sang one of the perfumed odes of the Bulbul of Shiraz.

"Pass 'round the flowing bowl, child,
Filled to the brim with bright wine;
All the ills and the woes of life
Are healed in this juice divine.
Has Time writ his lines on thy brow?
Has sleep through the night fled thine eyes?
Cast into these liquid flames
Thy regretful cares and thy sighs.

"Away with that drinker morose,
Who mourns for the years that are gone;
In these wines of amber and rose
The flowers and the spring live on.
Are the roses dead in thy bowers?
Has the nightingale left thee alone?
Drink, drink, and the clink of the glass
Shall be sweet as the bulbul's tone.

"Leave Fortune, the treacherous sprite,
To the weak or the wicked throng;
What good can she give us more,
Since she leaves us wine and song?

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The false one, lightly betrayed,
Nightly in visions I see;
Oh, wine, give me back the sweet dream!
Oblivion and love are in thee."

"Yes; give me oblivion," cried the son of Mansour.
"I know not what is the matter with me to-day; this
wine saddens instead of diverting me. Strike your in-
strument louder, sing faster, make more noise, intoxi-
cate me!"

The beautiful Persian sang merrily, striking her tam-
bourine:

"Hafiz, thou squanderest life;
'In the wine-cup death lurks,' say the old;
Oh, sages, he envies you not,
Nor your snowy locks, nor your gold;
You may chide him, but still he will drink;
Day and night he will still drink deep,
For wine only can cause him to smile,
Wine only can cause him to weep."

"Curses on you!" cried Omar, raising his hand to
strike the slave, who fled affrighted. "What name do
you bring me? Cannot the dead rest in their graves?
Will they come even here to trouble my repose? After
ridding myself of my enemies, shall I care for phan-
toms? Away with these chimeras! I will tear out
these memories from my heart; in spite of them all, I
will laugh and be happy." And as he said this he ut-
tered a cry of terror. Cafour stood before him.

"Where do you come from, child of the devil?" he
exclaimed. "What are you doing in my house?"

"That is what I wish to know," answered the child.
"It was not by my will that your servants carried me
to your harem."

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"Begone! I do not wish to see you."

"I will not go till you have given me back my mistress. I belong to Leila; I wish to serve her."

"Your mistress has no more need of your services."

"Why?" said the negress.

"Why?" replied the son of Mansour, in a broken voice. "You will know by and bye. Leila is in the desert; go and find her."

"No," said Cafour; "I shall stay here and wait for Abdallah."

"Abdallah is not in my house."

"He is; I have seen his horse."

"My servants brought away the horse at the same time with you."

"No; they did not," returned Cafour; "before your servants seized me, I had let Hamama loose. She was more fortunate than I; she escaped. If she is here, Abdallah must be here, too; if not, what have you done with your brother?"

"Away from here, insolent wretch! I will not be questioned by you. Dread my anger. I can cause you to die under the bastinado." His eyes glared at these words like a madman's.

"Why do you threaten me?" said Cafour, in a milder tone. "Although I am but a slave, perhaps I can serve you. You have some hidden trouble; I see it in your face. This trouble I can dispel. In my country we have spells to cure the heart. Were sorrow or even remorse preying upon your soul, I could draw it thence as the bezoar stone draws the venom from a wound."

"You have this power, a child like you!" said Omar, ironically, looking at Cafour, whose eyes steadfastly met his gaze. "Why not?" he added; "these Maghrebi negroes are all children of Satan; they know their father's secrets. Well, yes; I have a sorrow; cure me, and I will reward you."

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"Have you any hasheesh in your house?" said Cafour. "Let me mix you a drink; I will restore your gayety."

"Do what you will," replied Omar. "You are a slave. You know that I am rich and generous. I have confidence in you; I wish at any price to enjoy life."

Cafour soon found the hasheesh leaves. She brought them to the son of Mansour, who followed her movements with an eager eye. She took the plant, washed it three times, and rubbed it in her hands, muttering strange words. She then pounded the leaves in a copper mortar, and mixed them with spices and milk.

"Here is the cup of oblivion," said she. "Drink and fear nothing."

No sooner had Omar drunk than he felt his head suddenly grow light; his eyes dilated, and his senses became marvellously acute; yet, strange to say, he seemed moved by the will of Cafour. If she sang, he repeated the song; if she laughed, he burst into shouts of merriment; if she was grave, he wept; if she threatened him, he trembled. As soon as the negress saw him in her power, she set to work to wrest his secret from him.

"You are dissatisfied," said she; "you are avenged on your enemies."

"Yes; I am satisfied," said Omar, laughing; "I am avenged. The beautiful Leila will no longer love her Bedouin."

"Is she dead?" asked Cafour, in a trembling voice.

"She is dead," said Omar, weeping; "but I did not kill her; it was the negro. Poor woman! she would have been so well off in my harem!"

"And you no longer fear Abdallah," said Cafour, with an exulting air.

"No; I do not fear him. I took his horse and left

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which reached the inmates of the harem. They ran to his aid. At the sound of their footsteps Cafour set her foot on the face of Omar, and with a bound sprang to the outer door and disappeared.

CHAPTER XXXI.

TWO FRIENDS.

While the slaves flew to the succor of the son of Mansour, Cafour saddled Hamama, took a skin of water and some provisions, and galloped through the narrow streets of Djiddah. The night was dark and the storm was rumbling in the distance.

The child began to stroke the horse and talk to it, as if the brute understood the language of men. "Oh, dear Hamama," said she, "take me to your master. Together, we will save Abdallah. You know how much he loves you; no other hand has cared for you; help me to find him. Thanks to you, I will restore him to his mother; together we will weep for Leila, and I will comfort him. Do this, Hamama, and I will love you." She embraced the horse, and stretching herself about the neck of the animal, gave it full rein. Hamama darted on like an arrow, as if led by an invisible hand. As she rushed past an Arnaut post at daybreak, the frightened sentinel discharged his gun, declaring that he had seen Satan mounted on a white horse fleetier than the wind.

Thus flew Hamama, without pausing or needing to drink. A strange instinct impelled her toward her master. She went straight toward him, regardless of the beaten track, over rocks, through beds of rivers, and across deep gullies, with God for a guide.

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Toward midday Cafour perceived Abdallah in the distance, prostrate on the sand, as if in prayer. "Master! master!" she cried; "here I am." But neither the tread of the horse nor the cries of the child roused Abdallah from his contemplation. Hamama stopped, but he did not stir. Cafour, trembling, ran to him. He seemed asleep; his face was beaming with ecstasy; a heavenly smile was on his lips; sorrow had fled that countenance which had been a prey to such suffering. "Master! master! speak to me!" cried the poor slave, clasping him in her arms. He was cold; life had quitted the mortal covering; God had called to himself this spirit made for heaven.

"Abdallah!" cried Cafour, throwing herself on him and covering him with kisses, "Abdallah, I loved thee!" And she rendered up her soul to God.

Hamama gazed long at the two friends with anxiety, and laid her burning nostrils again and again on Cafour's cheek; then she stretched herself on the sand, with her eyes fixed on the two bodies, to await the awakening of those who were never to wake again on earth.

Long after, some Bedouins wandering in the desert discovered Abdallah and Cafour in the sands, so closely embraced that it was necessary to put them into the same coffin. Strange to say, the beasts of prey had devoured the horse, but not a vulture had alighted by day on the head of Abdallah; not a jackal had touched by night the body of Cafour.

Under the shade of the palms by the Well of the Benediction, two mounds of earth, surrounded with stones to keep off the jackals, mark the spot where the Bedouin, the Egyptian, and the negress await together the day of judgment. The fragrant jessamine, trailing from the branches of the trees, festoons the tomb, and surrounds it all the year with odorous blossoms. Here

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the weeping Halima mourned her children, till summoned by Azrael to join them; and here the wearied travellers pause, before quenching their thirst at the blessed well, to recite a Fât-háh in honor of Abdallah, well named the servant of God.¹

¹ Abdallah, in Arabic, signifies the servant of God.

THE BOTTLE IMP

THE BOTTLE IMP

Robert Louis Stevenson

THERE was a man of the island of Hawaii, whom I shall call Keawe; for the truth is, he still lives, and his name must be kept secret; but the place of his birth was not far from Honaunau, where the bones of Keawe the Great lie hidden in a cave. This man was poor, brave, and active; he could read and write like a school-master; he was a first-rate mariner besides, sailed for some time in the island steamers, and steered a whale-boat on the Hamakua coast. At length it came in Keawe's mind to have a sight of the great world and foreign cities, and he shipped on a vessel bound to San Francisco.

This is a fine town, with a fine harbor, and rich people uncountable; and, in particular, there is one hill which is covered with palaces. Upon this hill Keawe was one day taking a walk with his pocket full of money, viewing the great houses upon either hand with pleasure. "What fine houses there are!" he was thinking, "and how happy must these people be who dwell in them, and take no care for the morrow!" The thought was in his mind when he came abreast of a house that was smaller than some others, but all finished and beautified like a toy; the steps of that house shone like silver, and the borders of the garden bloomed like garlands, and the windows were bright like diamonds; and Keawe stopped and wondered at

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the excellence of all he saw. So stopping, he was aware of a man that looked forth upon him through a window, so clear that Keawe could see him as you see a fish in a pool upon the reef. The man was elderly, with a bald head and a black beard; and his face was heavy with sorrow, and he bitterly sighed. And the truth of it is, that as Keawe looked in upon the man, and the man looked out upon Keawe, each envied the other.

All of a sudden the man smiled and nodded, and beckoned Keawe to enter, and met him at the door of the house.

"This is a fine house of mine," said the man, and bitterly sighed. "Would you not care to view the chambers?"

So he led Keawe all over it, from the cellar to the roof, and there was nothing there that was not perfect of its kind, and Keawe was astonished.

"Truly," said Keawe, "this is a beautiful house; if I lived in the like of it I should be laughing all day long. How comes it, then, that you should be sighing?"

"There is no reason," said the man, "why you should not have a house in all points similar to this, and finer if you wish. You have some money, I suppose?"

"I have fifty dollars," said Keawe; "but a house like this will cost more than fifty dollars."

The man made a computation. "I am sorry you have no more," said he, "for it may raise you trouble in the future; but it shall be yours at fifty dollars."

"The house?" asked Keawe.

"No, not the house," replied the man; "but the bottle. For, I must tell you, although I appear to you so rich and fortunate, all my fortune, and this house itself and its garden, came out of a bottle not much bigger than a pint. This is it."

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And he opened a lockfast place, and took out a round-bellied bottle, with a long neck; the glass of it was white like milk, with changing rainbow colors in the grain. Withinsides something obscurely moved, like a shadow and a fire.

"This is the bottle," said the man; and, when Keawe laughed, "You do not believe me?" he added. "Try, then, for yourself. See if you can break it."

So Keawe took the bottle and dashed it on the floor till he was weary; but it jumped on the floor like a child's ball, and was not injured.

"This is a strange thing," said Keawe. "For by the touch of it, as well as by the look, the bottle should be of glass."

"Of glass it is," replied the man, sighing more heavily than ever; "but the glass of it was tempered in the flames of hell. An imp lives in it, and that is the shadow we behold there moving; or, so I suppose. If any man buy this bottle the imp is at his command; all that he desires—love, fame, money, houses like this house, ay, or a city like this city—all are his at the word uttered. Napoleon had this bottle, and by it he grew to be the king of the world; but he sold it at the last and fell. Captain Cook had this bottle, and by it he found his way to so many islands; but he, too, sold it, and was slain upon Hawaii. For, once it is sold, the power goes and the protection; and unless a man remain content with what he has, ill will befall him."

"And yet you talk of selling it yourself?" Keawe said.

"I have all I wish, and I am growing elderly," replied the man. "There is one thing the imp cannot do—he cannot prolong life; and it would not be fair to conceal from you there is a drawback to the bottle; for if a man die before he sells it, he must burn in hell forever."

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"To be sure, that is a drawback, and no mistake," cried Keawe. "I would not meddle with the thing. I can do without a house, thank God; but there is one thing I could not be doing with one particle, and that is to be damned."

"Dear me, you must not run away with things," returned the man. "All you have to do is to use the power of the imp in moderation, and then sell it to some one else, as I do to you, and finish your life in comfort."

"Well, I observe two things," said Keawe. "All the time you keep sighing like a maid in love, that is one; and, for the other, you sell this bottle very cheap."

"I have told you already why I sigh," said the man. "It is because I fear my health is breaking up; and, as you said yourself, to die and go to the devil is a pity for any one. As for why I sell so cheap, I must explain to you there is a peculiarity about the bottle. Long ago, when the devil brought it first upon earth, it was extremely expensive, and was sold first of all to Prester John for many millions of dollars; but it cannot be sold at all unless sold at a loss. If you sell it for as much as you paid for it, back it comes to you again like a homing-pigeon. It follows that the price has kept falling in these centuries, and the bottle is now remarkably cheap. I bought it myself from one of my great neighbors on this hill, and the price I paid was only ninety dollars. I could sell it for as high as eighty-nine dollars and ninety-nine cents, but not a penny dearer, or back the thing must come to me. Now, about this there are two bothers. First, when you offer a bottle so singular for eighty-odd dollars, people suppose you to be jesting. And, second—but there is no hurry about that—and I need not go into it. Only remember it must be coined money that you sell it for."

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"How am I to know that this is all true?" asked Keawe.

"Some of it you can try at once," replied the man. "Give me your fifty dollars, take the bottle, and wish your fifty dollars back into your pocket. If that does not happen, I pledge you my honor I will cry off the bargain and restore your money."

"You are not deceiving me?" said Keawe.

The man bound himself with a great oath.

"Well, I will risk that much," said Keawe, "for that can do no harm," and he paid over his money to the man, and the man handed him the bottle.

"Imp of the bottle," said Keawe, "I want my fifty dollars back." And, sure enough, he had scarce said the word before his pocket was as heavy as ever.

"To be sure, this is a wonderful bottle," said Keawe.

"And now, good-morning to you, my fine fellow, and the devil go with you for me," said the man.

"Hold on," said Keawe, "I don't want any more of this fun. Here, take your bottle back."

"You have bought it for less than I paid for it," replied the man, rubbing his hands. "It is yours now; and, for my part, I am only concerned to see the back of you." And with that he rang for his Chinese servant, and had Keawe shown out of the house.

Now, when Keawe was in the street, with the bottle under his arm, he began to think. "If all is true about this bottle, I have made a losing bargain," thinks he. "But, perhaps, the man was only fooling me." The first thing he did was to count his money; the sum was exact—forty-nine dollars, American money, and one Chili piece. "That looks like the truth," said Keawe. "Now, I will try another part."

The streets in that part of the city were as clean as a ship's deck, and, though it was noon, there were no passengers. Keawe set the bottle in the gutter and

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walked away. Twice he looked back, and there was the milky, round-bellied bottle where he left it. A third time he looked back, and turned a corner; but he had scarce done so, when something knocked upon his elbow, and behold! It was the long neck sticking up; and, as for the round belly, it was jammed into the pocket of his pilot-coat.

"And that looks like the truth," said Keawe.

The next thing he did was to buy a corkscrew in a shop, and go apart into a secret place in the fields. And there he tried to draw the cork, but as often as he put the screw in, out it came again, and the cork as whole as ever.

"This is some new sort of cork," said Keawe, and all at once he began to shake and sweat, for he was afraid of that bottle.

On his way back to the port-side he saw a shop where a man sold shells and clubs from the wild islands, old heathen deities, old coined money, pictures from China and Japan, and all manner of things that sailors bring in their sea-chests. And here he had an idea. So he went in and offered the bottle for a hundred dollars. The man of the shop laughed at him at first, and offered him five; but, indeed, it was a curious bottle, such glass was never blown in any human glass-works, so prettily the colors shown under the milky white, and so strangely the shadow hovered in the midst; so, after he had disputed awhile after the manner of his kind, the shopman gave Keawe sixty silver dollars for the thing, and set it on a shelf in the midst of his window.

"Now," said Keawe, "I have sold that for sixty which I bought for fifty—or, to say truth, a little less, because one of my dollars was from Chili. Now I shall know the truth upon another point."

So he went back on board his ship, and when he

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opened his chest, there was the bottle, and had come more quickly than himself. Now Keake had a mate on board, whose name was Lopaka.

"What ails you?" said Lopaka, "that you stare in your chest?"

They were alone in the ship's forecandle, and Keawe bound him to secrecy, and told all.

"This is a very strange affair," said Lopaka; "and I fear you will be in trouble about this bottle. But there is one point very clear—that you are sure of the trouble, and you had better have the profit in the bargain. Make up your mind what you want with it; give the order, and if it is done as you desire, I will buy the bottle myself; for I have an idea of my own to get a schooner, and go trading through the islands."

"That is not my idea," said Keawe, "but to have a beautiful house and garden on the Kona Coast, where I was born, the sun shining in at the door, flowers in the garden, glass in the windows, pictures on the walls, and toys and fine carpets on the tables, for all the world like the house I was in this day—only a story higher, and with balconies all about like the King's palace; and to live there without care and make merry with my friends and relatives."

"Well," said Lopaka, "let us carry it back with us to Hawaii; and, if all comes true, as you suppose, I will buy the bottle, as I said, and ask a schooner."

Upon that they were agreed, and it was not long before the ship returned to Honolulu, carrying Keawe and Lopaka and the bottle. They were scarce come ashore when they met a friend upon the beach, who began at once to condole with Keawe.

"I do not know what I am to be consoled about," said Keawe.

"Is it possible you have not heard," said the friend,

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"your uncle—that good, old man—is dead, and your cousin—that beautiful boy—was drowned at sea?"

Keawe was filled with sorrow, and, beginning to weep and to lament, he forgot about the bottle. But Lopaka was thinking to himself, and presently, when Keawe's grief was a little abated, "I have been thinking," said Lopaka, "had not your uncle lands in Hawaïi, in the district of Kau?"

"No," said Keawe; "not in Kau; they are on the mountainside—a little be south Hookena."

"These lands will now be yours?" asked Lopaka.

"And so they will," says Keawe, and began again to lament for his relatives.

"No," said Lopaka, "do not lament at present. I have a thought in my mind. How if this should be the doing of the bottle? For here is the place ready for your house."

"If this be so," cried Keawe, "it is a very ill way to serve me by killing my relatives. But it may be, indeed; for it was in just such a station that I saw the house with my mind's eye."

"The house, however, is not yet built," said Lopaka.

"No, nor like to be!" said Keawe; "for though my uncle has some coffee and ava and bananas, it will not be more than will keep me in comfort; and the rest of that land is the black lava."

"Let us go to the lawyer," said Lopaka; "I have still this idea in my mind."

Now, when they came to the lawyer's, it appeared Keawe's uncle had grown monstrous rich in the last days, and there was a fund of money.

"And here is the money for the house!" cried Lopaka.

"If you are thinking of a new house," said the lawyer, "here is the card of a new architect, of whom they tell me great things."

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"Better and better!" cried Lopaka. "Here is all made plain for us. Let us continue to obey orders."

So they went to the architect, and he had drawings of houses on his table.

"You want something out of the way," said the architect. "How do you like this?" and he handed a drawing to Keawe.

Now, when Keawe set eyes on the drawing, he cried out aloud, for it was the picture of his thought exactly drawn.

"I am in for this house," thought he. "Little as I like the way it comes to me, I am in for it now, and I may as well take the good along with the evil."

So he told the architect all that he wished, and how he would have that house furnished, and about the pictures on the wall and the knick-knacks on the tables; and he asked the man plainly for how much he would undertake the whole affair.

The architect put many questions, and took his pen and made a computation; and when he had done he named the very sum that Keawe had inherited.

Lopaka and Keawe looked at one another and nodded.

"It is quite clear," thought Keawe, "that I am to have this house, whether or no. It comes from the devil, and I fear I will get little good by that; and of one thing I am sure, I will make no more wishes as long as I have this bottle. But with the house I am saddled, and I may as well take the good along with the evil."

So he made his terms with the architect, and they signed a paper; and Keawe and Lopaka took ship again and sailed to Australia; for it was concluded between them they should not interfere at all, but leave the architect and the bottle-imp to build and to adorn that house at their own pleasure.

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The voyage was a good voyage, only all the time Keawe was holding in his breath, for he had sworn he would utter no more wishes, and take no more favors, from the devil. The time was up when they got back. The architect told them that the house was ready, and Keawe and Lopaka took a passage in the Hall, and went down Kona way to view the house, and see if all had been done fitly according to the thought that was in Keawe's mind.

Now, the house stood on the mountain side, visible to ships. Above, the forest ran up into the clouds of rain; below, the black lava fell in cliffs, where the kings of old lay buried. A garden bloomed about that house with every hue of flowers; and there was an orchard of papaia on the one hand and an orchard of herdprint on the other, and right in front, toward the sea, a ship's mast had been rigged up and bore a flag. As for the house, it was three stories high, with great chambers and broad balconies on each. The windows were of glass, so excellent that it was as clear as water and as bright as day. All manner of furniture adorned the chambers. Pictures hung upon the wall in golden frames—pictures of ships, and men fighting, and of the most beautiful women, and of singular places; nowhere in the world are there pictures of so bright a color as those Keawe found hanging in his house. As for the knick-knacks, they were extraordinarily fine; chiming clocks and musical boxes, little men with nodding heads, books filled with pictures, weapons of price from all quarters of the world, and the most elegant puzzles to entertain the leisure of a solitary man. And as no one would care to live in such chambers, only to walk through and view them, the balconies were made so broad that a whole town might have lived upon them in delight; and Keawe knew not which to prefer, whether the back porch, where you get the land breeze, and

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looked upon the orchards and the flowers, or the front balcony, where you could drink the wind of the sea, and look down the steep wall of the mountain and see the Hall going by once a week or so between Hookena and the hills of Pele, or the schooners plying up the coast for wood and ava and bananas.

When they had viewed all, Keawe and Lopaka sat on the porch.

"Well," asked Lopaka, "is it all as you designed?"

"Words cannot utter it," said Keawe. "It is better than I dreamed, and I am sick with satisfaction."

"There is but one thing to consider," said Lopaka, "all this may be quite natural, and the bottle-imp have nothing whatever to say to it. If I were to buy the bottle, and got no schooner after all, I should have put my hand in the fire for nothing. I gave you my word, I know; but yet I think you would not grudge me one more proof."

"I have sworn I would take no more favors," said Keawe. "I have gone already deep enough."

"This is no favor I am thinking of," replied Lopaka. "It is only to see the imp himself. There is nothing to be gained by that, and so nothing to be ashamed of, and yet, if I once saw him, I should be sure of the whole matter. So indulge me so far, and let me see the imp; and, after that, here is the money in my hand, and I will buy it."

"There is only one thing I am afraid of," said Keawe. "The imp may be very ugly to view, and if you once set eyes upon him you might be very undesirous of the bottle."

"I am a man of my word," said Lopaka. "And here is the money betwixt us."

"Very well," replied Keawe, "I have a curiosity myself. So come, let us have one look at you, Mr. Imp."

Now as soon as that was said, the imp looked out of

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the bottle, and in again, swift as a lizard; and there sat Keawe and Lopaka turned to stone. The night had quite come, before either found a thought to say or voice to say it with; and then Lopaka pushed the money over and took the bottle.

"I am a man of my word," said he, "and had need to be so, or I would not touch this bottle with my foot. Well, I shall get my schooner and a dollar or two for my pocket; and then I will be rid of this devil as fast as I can. For to tell you the plain truth, the look of him has cast me down."

"Lopaka," said Keawe, "do you not think any worse of me than you can help; I know it is night, and the roads bad, and the pass by the tombs an ill place to go by so late, but I declare since I have seen that little face, I cannot eat or sleep or pray till it is gone from me. I will give you a lantern, and a basket to put the bottle in, and any picture or fine thing in all my house that takes your fancy; and be gone at once, and go sleep at Hookena with Nahinu."

"Keawe," said Lopaka, "many a man would take this ill; above all, when I am doing you a turn so friendly, as to keep my word and buy the bottle; and for that matter, the night and the dark, and the way by the tombs, must be all tenfold more dangerous to a man with such a sin upon his conscience, and such a bottle under his arm. But for my part, I am so extremely terrified myself, I have not the heart to blame you. Here I go, then; and I pray God you may be happy in your house, and I fortunate with my schooner, and both get to heaven in the end in spite of the devil and his bottle.

So Lopaka went down the mountain; and Keawe stood in his front balcony, and listened to the clink of the horse's shoes and watched the lantern go shining down the path and along the cliff of caves where the

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old dead are buried; and all the time he trembled and clasped his hands and prayed for his friend, and gave glory to God that he himself was escaped out of that trouble.

But the next day came very brightly, and that new house of his was so delightful to behold that he forgot his terrors. One day followed another, and Keawe dwelt there in perpetual joy. He had his place on the back porch; it was there he ate and lived, and read the stories in the Honolulu newspapers; but when any one came by they would go in and view the chambers and the pictures. And the fame of the house went far and wide; it was called Ka-Hale Nui—the Great House—in all Kona; and sometimes the Bright House, for Keawe kept a Chinaman, who was all day dusting and furbishing; and the glass and the gilt and the fine stuffs and the pictures shone as bright as the morning. As for Keawe himself, he could not walk in the chambers without singing, his heart was so enlarged; and when ships sailed by upon the sea, he would fly his colors on the mast.

So time went by, until one day Keawe went upon a visit as far as Kailua to certain of his friends. There he was well feasted; and left as soon as he could the next morning, and rode hard, for he was impatient to behold his beautiful house; and, besides, the night then coming on was the night in which the dead of old days go abroad in the sides of Kona; and having already meddled with the devil, he was the more chary of meeting with the dead. A little beyond Honaunau, looking far ahead, he was aware of a woman bathing in the edge of the sea; and she seemed a well-grown girl, but he thought no more of it. Then he saw her white shift flutter as she put it on, and then her red holoku; and by the time he came abreast of her she was done with her toilet, and had come up from the sea, and stood by the

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track-side in her red holoku, and she was all freshened with the bath, and her eyes shone and were kind. Now Keawe no sooner beheld her than he drew rein.

"I thought I knew every one in this country," said he. "How comes it that I do not know you?"

"I am Kokua, daughter of Kiano," said the girl, "and I have just returned from Oahu. Who are you?"

"I will tell you who I am in a little," said Keawe, dismounting from his horse, "but not now. For I have a thought in my mind, and if you knew who I was, you might have heard of me, and would not give me a true answer. But tell me, first of all, one thing: are you married?"

At this Kokua laughed out aloud. "It is you who ask questions," she said. "Are you married yourself?"

"Indeed, Kokua, I am not," replied Keawe, "and never thought to be until this hour. But here is the plain truth. I have met you here at the road-side, and I saw your eyes, which are like the stars, and my heart went to you as swift as a bird. And so now, if you want none of me, say so, and I will go on to my own place; but if you think me no worse than any other young man, say so, too, and I will turn aside to your father's for the night, and to-morrow I will talk with the good man."

Kokua said never a word, but she looked at the sea and laughed.

"Kokua," said Keawe, "if you say nothing, I will take that for the good answer; so let us be stepping to your father's door."

She went on ahead of him, still without speech; only sometimes she glanced back and glanced away again, and she kept the strings of her hat in her mouth.

Now, when they had come to the door, Kiano came out on his veranda, and cried out and welcomed Keawe by name. At that the girl looked over, for the fame of

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the great house had come to her ears; and, to be sure, it was a great temptation. All that evening they were very merry together; and the girl was as bold as brass under the eyes of her parents, and made a mark of Keawe, for she had a quick wit. The next day he had a word with Kiano, and found the girl alone.

"Kokua," said he, "you made a mark of me all the evening; and it is still time to bid me go. I would not tell you who I was, because I have so fine a house, and I feared you would think too much of that house and too little of the man that loves you. Now you know all, and if you wish to have seen the last of me, say so at once."

"No," said Kokua, but this time she did not laugh, nor did Keawe ask for more.

This was the wooing of Keawe; things had gone quickly; but so an arrow goes, and the ball of a rifle swifter still, and yet both may strike the target. Things had gone fast, but they had gone far also, and the thought of Keawe rang in the maiden's head; she heard his voice in the breach of the surf upon the lava, and for this young man that she had seen but twice she would have left father and mother and her native islands. As for Keawe himself, his horse flew up the path of the mountain under the cliff of tombs, and the sound of the hoofs, and the sound of Keawe singing to himself for pleasure, echoed in the caverns of the dead. He came to the Bright House, and still he was singing. He sat and ate in the broad balcony, and the Chinaman wondered at his master, to hear how he sang between the mouthfuls. The sun went down into the sea, and the night came; and Keawe walked the balconies by lamplight, high on the mountains, and the voice of his singing startled men on ships.

"Here am I now upon my high place," he said to himself. "Life may be no better; this is the mountain

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top; and all shelves about me toward the worse. For the first time I will light up the chambers, and bathe in my fine bath with the hot water and the cold, and sleep above in the bed of my bridal chamber."

So the Chinaman had word, and he must rise from sleep and light the furnaces; and as he walked below, beside the boilers, he heard his master singing and rejoicing above him in the lighted chambers. When the water began to be hot the Chinaman cried to his master; and Keawe went into the bath-room; and the Chinaman heard him sing as he filled the marble basin, and heard him sing, and the singing broken, as he undressed; until of a sudden, the song ceased. The Chinaman listened, and listened; he called up the house to Keawe to ask if all were well, and Keawe answered him "Yes," and bade him go to bed; but there was no more singing in the Bright House; and all night long the Chinaman heard his master's feet go round and round the balconies without repose.

Now, the truth of it was this: as Keawe undressed for his bath, he spied upon his flesh a patch like a patch of lichen on a rock, and it was then that he stopped singing. For he knew the likeness of that patch, and knew that he was fallen in the Chinese Evil.

Now, it is a sad thing for any man to fall into this sickness. And it would be a sad thing for any one to leave a house so beautiful and so commodious, and depart from all his friends to the north coast of Molokai, between the mighty cliff and the sea-breakers. But what was that to the case of the man Keawe, he who had met his love but yesterday, and won her but that morning, and now saw all his hopes break, in a moment, like a piece of glass?

Awhile he sat upon the edge of the bath, then sprang

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with a cry and ran outside; and to and fro, to and fro, along the balcony, like one despairing.

"Very willingly could I leave Hawaii, the home of my fathers," Keawe was thinking. "Very lightly could I leave my house, the high-placed, the many-windowed, here upon the mountains. Very bravely could I go to Molokai, to Kalaupapa by the cliffs, to live with the smitten and to sleep there, far from my fathers. But what wrong have I done, what sin lies upon my soul, that I should have encountered Kokua coming cool from the seawater in the evening? Kokua, the soul ensnarer! Kokua, the light of my life! Her may I never wed, her may I look upon no longer, her may I no more handle with my loving hand; and it is for this, it is for you, O Kokua! that I pour my lamentations!"

Now you are to observe what sort of a man Keawe was, for he might have dwelt there in the Bright House for years, and no one been the wiser of his sickness; but he reckoned nothing of that, if he must lose Kokua. And again he might have wed Kokua even as he was; and so many would have done, because they have the souls of pigs; but Keawe loved the maid manfully, and he would do her no hurt and bring her in no danger.

A little beyond the midst of the night, there came in his mind the recollection of that bottle. He went round to the back porch and called to memory the day when the devil had looked forth; and at the thought ice ran in his veins.

"A dreadful thing is the bottle," thought Keawe, "and dreadful is the imp, and it is a dreadful thing to risk the flames of hell. But what other hope have I to cure my sickness or to wed Kokua? What!" he thought, "would I beard the devil once, only to get me a house, and not face him again to win Kokua?"

Thereupon he called to mind it was the next day the Hall went by on her return to Honolulu. "There must

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I go first," he thought, "and see Lopaka. For the best hope that I have now is to find that same bottle I was so pleased to be rid of."

Never a wink could he sleep; the food stuck in his throat; but he sent a letter to Kiano, and about the time when the steamer would be coming, rode down beside the cliff of the tombs. It rained; his horse went heavily; he looked up at the black mouths of the caves, and he envied the dead that slept there and were done with trouble; and called to mind how he had galloped by the day before, and was astonished. So he came down to Hookena, and there was all the country gathered for the steamer as usual. In the shed before the store they sat and jested and passed the news; but there was not matter of speech in Keawe's bosom, and he sat in their midst and looked without on the rain falling on the houses, and the surf beating among the rocks, and the sighs arose in his throat.

"Keawe of the Bright House is out of spirits," said one to another. Indeed, and so he was, and little wonder.

Then the Hall came, and the whaleboat carried him on board. The after-part of the ship was full of Haoles—whites—who had been to visit the volcano, as their custom is; and the midst was crowded with Kanakas, and the fore-part with wild bulls from Hilo and horses from Kau; but Keawe sat apart from all in his sorrow, and watched for the house of Kiano. There it sat low upon the shore in the black rocks, and shaded by the coron palms, and there by the door was a red holoku, no greater than a fly, and going to and fro with a fly's busyness. "Ah, queen of my heart," he cried, "I'll venture my dear soul to win you!"

Soon after darkness fell and the cabins were lit up, and the Haoles sat and played at the cards and drank whiskey as their custom is; but Keawe walked the deck

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all night; and all the next day, as they steamed under the lee of Maui or of Molokai, he was still pacing to and fro like a wild animal in a menagerie.

Toward evening they passed Diamond Head, and came to the pier of Honolulu. Keawe stepped out among the crowd and began to ask for Lopaka. It seemed he had become the owner of a schooner—none better in the islands—and was gone upon an adventure as far as Pola-Pola or Kahiki; so there was no help to be looked for from Lopaka. Keawe called to mind a friend of his, a lawyer in the town (I must not tell his name), and inquired of him. They said he was grown suddenly rich, and had a fine new house upon Waikiki shore; and this put a thought in Keawe's head, and he called a hack and drove to the lawyer's house.

The house was all brand new, and the trees in the garden no greater than walking-sticks, and the lawyer, when he came, had the air of a man well pleased.

"What can I do to serve you?" said the lawyer.

"You are a friend of Lopaka's," replied Keawe, "and Lopaka purchased from me a certain piece of goods that I thought you might enable me to trace."

The lawyer's face became very dark. "I do not profess to misunderstand you, Mr. Keawe," said he, "though this is an ugly business to be stirring in. You may be sure I know nothing, but yet I have a guess, and if you would apply in a certain quarter I think you might have news."

And he named the name of a man, which, again, I had better not repeat. So it was for days, and Keawe went from one to another, finding everywhere new clothes and carriages, and fine new houses and men everywhere in great contentment, although, to be sure, when he hinted at his business their faces would cloud over.

"No doubt I am upon the track," thought Keawe.

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"These new clothes and carriages are all the gifts of the little imp, and these glad faces are the faces of men who have taken their profit and got rid of the accursed thing in safety. When I see pale cheeks and hear sighing, I shall know that I am near the bottle."

So it befell at last that he was recommended to a Haole in Beritania Street. When he came to the door, about the hour of the evening meal, there were the usual marks of the new house, and the young garden, and the electric light shining in the windows; but when the owner came, a shock of hope and fear ran through Keawe; for here was a young man, white as a corpse, and black about the eyes, the hair shedding from his head, and such a look in his countenance as a man may have when he is waiting for the gallows.

"Here it is, to be sure," thought Keawe, and so with this man he noways veiled his errand. "I am come to buy the bottle," said he.

At the word, the young Haole of Beritania Street reeled against the wall.

"The bottle!" he gasped. "To buy the bottle!" Then he seemed to choke, and seizing Keawe by the arm, carried him into a room and poured out wine in two glasses.

"Here is my respects," said Keawe, who had been much about with Haoles in his time. "Yes," he added, "I am come to buy the bottle. What is the price by now?"

At that word the young man let his glass slip through his fingers, and looked upon Keawe like a ghost.

"The price," says he; "the price! You do not know the price?"

"It is for that I am asking you," returned Keawe. "But why are you so much concerned? Is there anything wrong about the price?"

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"It has dropped a great deal in value since your time, Mr. Keawe," said the young man, stammering.

"Well, well, I shall have the less to pay for it," says Keawe. "How much did it cost you?"

The young man was as white as a sheet. "Two cents," said he.

"What?" cried Keawe, "two cents? Why, then, you can only sell it for one. And he who buys it——" The words died upon Keawe's tongue; he who bought it could never sell it again, the bottle and the bottle imp must abide with him until he died, and when he died must carry him to the red end of hell.

The young man of Beritania Street fell upon his knees. "For God's sake, buy it!" he cried. "You can have all my fortune in the bargain. I was mad when I bought it at that price. I had embezzled money at my store; I was lost else; I must have gone to jail."

"Poor creature," said Keawe, "you would risk your soul upon so desperate an adventure, and to avoid the proper punishment of your own disgrace; and you think I could hesitate with love in front of me. Give me the bottle, and the change which I make sure you have all ready. Here is a five-cent piece."

It was as Keawe supposed; the young man had the change ready in a drawer; the bottle changed hands, and Keawe's fingers were no sooner clasped upon the stalk than he had breathed his wish to be a clean man. And, sure enough, when he got home to his room, and stripped himself before a glass, his flesh was whole like an infant's. And here was the strange thing: he had no sooner seen this miracle than his mind was changed within him, and he cared naught for the Chinese Evil, and little enough for Kokua; and had but the one thought, that here he was bound to the bottle imp for time and for eternity, and had no better hope but to be a cinder forever in the flames of hell. Away ahead of

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him he saw them blaze with his mind's eye, and his soul shrank, and darkness fell upon the light.

When Keawe came to himself a little, he was aware it was the night when the band played at the hotel. Thither he went, because he feared to be alone; and there, among happy faces, walked to and fro, and heard the tunes go up and down, and saw Berger beat the measure, and all the while he heard the flames crackle, and saw the red fire burning in the bottomless pit. Of a sudden the band played Hiki-ao-ao; that was a song that he had sung with Kokua, and at the strain courage returned to him.

"It is done now," he thought, "and once more let me take the good along with the evil."

So it befell that he returned to Hawaii by the first steamer, and as soon as it could be managed he was wedded to Kokua, and carried her up the mountain side to the Bright House.

Now it was so with these two, that when they were together Keawe's heart was stilled; but so soon as he was alone he fell into a brooding horror, and heard the flames crackle, and saw the red fire burn in the bottomless pit. The girl, indeed, had come to him wholly; her heart leaped in her side at sight of him, her hand clung to his; and she was so fashioned, from the hair upon her head to the nails upon her toes, that none could see her without joy. She was pleasant in her nature. She had the good word always. Full of song she was, and went to and fro in the Bright House, the brightest thing in its three stories, carolling like the birds. And Keawe beheld and heard her with delight, and then must shrink upon one side, and weep and groan to think upon the price that he had paid for her; and then he must dry his eyes, and wash his face, and go and sit with her on the broad balconies, joining in her songs, and, with a sick spirit, answering her smiles.

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There came a day when her feet began to be heavy and her songs more rare; and now it was not Keawe only that would weep apart, but each would sunder from the other and sit in opposite balconies with the whole width of the Bright House betwixt. Keawe was so sunk in his despair, he scarce observed the change, and was only glad he had more hours to sit alone and brood upon his destiny, and was not so frequently condemned to put a smiling face on a sick heart. But one day, coming softly through the house, he heard the sound of a child sobbing, and there was Kokua rolling her face upon the balcony floor, and weeping like the lost.

"You do well to weep in this house, Kokua," he said. "And yet I would give the head off my body that you (at least) might have been happy."

"Happy!" she cried. "Keawe, when you lived alone in your Bright House you were the word of the island for a happy man; laughter and song were in your mouth, and your face was as bright as the sunrise. Then you wedded poor Kokua; and the good God knows what is amiss in her—but from that day you have not smiled. Oh!" she cried, "what ails me? I thought I was pretty, and I knew I loved him. What ails me, that I throw this cloud upon my husband?"

"Poor Kokua," said Keawe. He sat down by her side, and sought to take her hand; but that she plucked away. "Poor Kokua," he said, again. "My poor child—my pretty. And I had thought all this while to spare you! Well, you shall know all. Then, at least, you will pity poor Keawe; then you will understand how much he loved you in the past—that he dared hell for your possession—and how much he loves you still (the poor condemned one), that he can yet call up a smile when he beholds you."

With that, he told her all, even from the beginning.

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"You have done this for me?" she cried. "Ah, well, then what do I care!" and she clasped and wept upon him.

"Ah, child!" said Keawe, "and yet, when I consider of the fire of hell, I care a good deal!"

"Never tell me," said she, "no man can be lost because he loved Kokua, and no other fault. I tell you, Keawe, I shall save you with these hands or perish in your company. What! you loved me and gave your soul, and you think I will not die to save you in return?"

"Ah, my dear, you might die a hundred times, and what difference would that make?" he cried, "except to leave me lonely till the time comes of my damnation?"

"You know nothing," said she. "I was educated in a school in Honolulu; I am no common girl. And I tell you I shall save my lover. What is this you say about a cent? But all the world is not American. In England they have a piece they call a farthing, which is about half a cent. Ah! sorrow!" she cried, "that makes it scarcely better, for the buyer must be lost, and we shall find none so brave as my Keawe! But, then, there is France; they have a small coin there which they call a centime, and these go five to the cent or thereabout. We could not do better. Come, Keawe, let us go to the French islands; let us go to Tahiti, as fast as ships can bear us. There we have four centimes, three centimes, two centimes, one centime; four possible sales to come and go on; and two of us to push the bargain. Come, my Keawe! kiss me, and banish care. Kokua will defend you."

"Gift of God!" he cried. "I cannot think that God will punish me for desiring aught so good! Be it as you will, then, take me where you please; I put my life and my salvation in your hands."

Early the next day Kokua was about her prepara-

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tions. She took Keawe's chest that he went with sailing; and first she put the bottle in a corner, and then packed it with the richest of their clothes and the bravest of the knick-knacks in the house. "For," said she, "we must seem to be rich folks, or who will believe in the bottle?" All the time of her preparation she was as gay as a bird; only when she looked upon Keawe the tears would spring in her eye, and she must run and kiss him. As for Keawe, a weight was off his soul; now that he had his secret shared, and some hope in front of him, he seemed like a new man, his feet went lightly on the earth, and his breath was good to him again. Yet was terror still at his elbow; and ever and again, as the wind blows out a taper, hope died in him, and he saw the flames toss and the red fire burn in hell.

It was given out in the country they were gone pleasuring to the States, which was thought a strange thing, and yet not so strange as the truth, if any could have guessed it. So they went to Honolulu in the Hall, and thence in the Umatilla to San Francisco with a crowd of Haoles, and at San Francisco took their passage by the mail brigantine, the Tropic Bird, for Papeete, the chief place of the French in the south islands. Thither they came, after a pleasant voyage, on a fair day of the Trade wind, and saw the reef with the surf breaking and Motuiti with its palms, and the schooner riding within-side, and the white houses of the town low down along the shore among green trees, and overhead the mountains and the clouds of Tahiti, the wise island.

It was judged the most wise to hire a house, which they did accordingly, opposite the British Consul's, to make a great parade of money, and themselves conspicuous with carriages and horses. This it was very easy to do, so long as they had the bottle in their

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possession; for Kokua was more bold than Keawe, and, whenever she had a mind, called on the imp for twenty or a hundred dollars. At this rate they soon grew to be remarked in the town; and the strangers from Hawaii, their riding and their driving, the fine holokus, and the rich lace of Kokua, became the matter of much talk.

They got on well after the first with the Tahitian language, which is indeed like to the Hawaiian, with a change of certain letters; and as soon as they had any freedom of speech, began to push the bottle. You are to consider it was not an easy subject to introduce; it was not easy to persuade people you were in earnest, when you offered to sell them for four centimes the spring of health and riches inexhaustible. It was necessary besides to explain the dangers of the bottle; and either people disbelieved the whole thing and laughed, or they thought the more of the darker part, became overcast with gravity, and drew away from Keawe and Kokua, as from persons who had dealings with the devil. So far from gaining ground, these two began to find they were avoided in the town; the children ran away from them screaming, a thing intolerable to Kokua; Catholics crossed themselves as they went by; and all persons began with one accord to disengage themselves from their advances.

Depression fell upon their spirits. They would sit at night in their new house, after a day's weariness, and not exchange one word, or the silence would be broken by Kokua bursting suddenly into sobs. Sometimes they would pray together; sometimes they would have the bottle out upon the floor, and sit all evening watching how the shadow hovered in the midst. At such times they would be afraid to go to rest. It was long ere slumber came to them, and, if either dozed off, it would be to wake and find the other silently weeping in

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the dark, or, perhaps, to wake alone, the other having fled from the house and the neighborhood of that bottle, to pace under the bananas in the little garden, or to wander on the beach by moonlight.

One night it was so when Kokua awoke. Keawe was gone. She felt in the bed and his place was cold. Then fear fell upon her, and she sat up in bed. A little moonshine filtered through the shutters. The moon was bright, and she could spy the bottle on the floor. Outside it blew high, the great trees of the avenue cried aloud, and the fallen leaves rattled in the veranda. In the midst of this Kokua was aware of another sound; whether of a beast or of a man she could scarce tell, but it was as sad as death, and cut her to the soul. Softly she arose, set the door ajar, and looked forth into the moonlit yard. There, under the bananas, lay Keawe, his mouth in the dust, and as he lay he moaned.

It was Kokua's first thought to run forward and console him; her second potently withheld her. Keawe had borne himself before his wife like a brave man; it became her little in the hour of weakness to intrude upon his shame. With the thought she drew back into the house.

"Heaven," she thought, "how careless have I been—how weak! It is he, not I, that stands in this eternal peril; it was he, not I, that took the curse upon his soul. It was for my sake, and for the love of a creature of so little worth and such poor help, that he now beholds so close to him the flames of hell—ay, and smells the smoke of it, lying without there in the wind and moonlight. Am I so dull of spirit that never till now I have surmised my duty, or have I seen it before and turned aside? But now, at least, I take up my soul in both the hands of my affection; now I say farewell to the white steps of heaven and the waiting faces of my

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friends. A love for a love, and let mine be equalled with Keawe's! A soul for a soul, and be it mine to perish!"

She was a deft woman with her hands, and was soon apparelled. She took in her hands the change—the precious centimes they kept ever at their side; for this coin is little used, and they had made provision at a government office. When she was forth in the avenue clouds came on the wind, and the moon was blackened. The town slept, and she knew not whither to turn till she heard one coughing in the shadow of the trees.

"Old man," said Kokua, "what do you here abroad in the cold night?"

The old man could scarce express himself for coughing, but she made out that he was old and poor, and a stranger in the island.

"Will you do me a service?" said Kokua. "As one stranger to another, and as an old man to a young woman, will you help a daughter of Hawaii?"

"Ah," said the old man. "So you are the witch from the eight islands, and even my old soul you seek to entangle. But I have heard of you, and defy your wickedness."

"Sit down here," said Kokua, "and let me tell you a tale." And she told him the story of Keawe from the beginning to the end.

"And now," said she, "I am his wife, whom he bought with his soul's welfare. And what should I do? If I went to him myself and offered to buy it, he will refuse. But if you go, he will sell it eagerly; I will await you here; you will buy it for four centimes, and I will buy it again for three. And the Lord strengthen a poor girl!"

"If you meant falsely," said the old man, "I think God would strike you dead."

"He would!" cried Kokua. "Be sure he would. I

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could not be so treacherous, God would not suffer it."

"Give me the four centimes and await me here," said the old man.

Now, when Kokua stood alone in the street, her spirit died. The wind roared in the trees, and it seemed to her the rushing of the flames of hell; the shadows towered in the light of the street lamp, and they seemed to her the snatching hands of evil ones. If she had had the strength, she must have run away, and if she had had the breath she must have screamed aloud; but, in truth, she could do neither, and stood and trembled in the avenue, like an affrighted child.

Then she saw the old man returning, and he had the bottle in his hand.

"I have done your bidding," said he, "I left your husband weeping like a child; to-night he will sleep easy." And he held the bottle forth.

"Before you give it me," Kokua panted, "take the good with the evil—ask to be delivered from your cough."

"I am an old man," replied the other, "and too near the gate of the grave to take a favor from the devil. But what is this? Why do you not take the bottle? Do you hesitate?"

"Not hesitate!" cried Kokua. "I am only weak. Give me a moment. It is my hand resists, my flesh shrinks back from the accursed thing. One moment only!"

The old man looked upon Kokua kindly. "Poor child!" said he, "you fear; your soul misgives you. Well, let me keep it. I am old, and can never more be happy in this world, and as for the next——"

"Give it me!" gasped Kokua. "There is your money. Do you think I am so base as that? Give me the bottle."

"God bless you, child," said the old man.

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Kokua concealed the bottle under her holoku, said farewell to the old man, and walked off along the avenue, she cared not whither. For all roads were now the same to her, and led equally to hell. Sometimes she walked, and sometimes ran; sometimes she screamed out loud in the night, and sometimes lay by the wayside in the dust and wept. All that she had heard of hell came back to her; she saw the flames blaze, and she smelled the smoke, and her flesh withered on the coals.

Near day she came to her mind again, and returned to the house. It was even as the old man said—Keawe slumbered like a child. Kokua stood and gazed upon his face.

"Now, my husband," said she, "it is your turn to sleep. When you wake it will be your turn to sing and laugh. But for poor Kokua, alas! that meant no evil—for poor Kokua no more sleep, no more singing, no more delight, whether in earth or Heaven."

With that she lay down in the bed by his side, and her misery was so extreme that she fell in a deep slumber instantly.

Late in the morning her husband woke her and gave her the good news. It seemed he was silly with delight, for he paid no heed to her distress, ill though she dissembled it. The words stuck in her mouth, it mattered not; Keawe did the speaking. She ate not a bite, but who was to observe it? For Keawe cleared the dish. Kokua saw and heard him, like some strange thing in a dream; there were times when she forgot or doubted, and put her hands to her brow; to know herself doomed and hear her husband babble, seemed so monstrous.

All the while Keawe was eating and talking, and planning the time of their return, and thanking her for saving him, and fondling her, and calling her the

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true helper after all. He laughed at the old man that was fool enough to buy that bottle.

"A worthy old man he seemed," Keawe said. "But no one can judge by appearances. For why did the old reprobate require the bottle?"

"My husband," said Kokua, humbly, "his purpose may have been good."

Keawe laughed like an angry man.

"Fiddle-de-dee!" cried Keawe. "An old rogue, I tell you; and an old ass to boot. For the bottle was hard enough to sell at four centimes; and at three it will be quite impossible. The margin is not broad enough, the thing begins to smell of scorching—brrr!" said he, and shuddered. "It is true I bought it myself at a cent, when I knew not there were smaller coins. I was a fool for my pains; there will never be found another, and whoever has that bottle now will carry it to the pit."

"O my husband!" said Kokua. "Is it not a terrible thing to save oneself by the eternal ruin of another? It seems to me I could not laugh. I would be humbled. I would be filled with melancholy. I would pray for the poor holder."

Then Keawe, because he felt the truth of what she said, grew the more angry. "Heighty-teighty!" cried he. "You may be filled with melancholy if you please. It is not the mind of a good wife. If you thought at all of me, you would sit shamed."

Thereupon he went out, and Kokua was alone.

What chance had she to sell that bottle at two centimes? None, she perceived. And if she had any, here was her husband hurrying her away to a country where there was nothing lower than a cent. And here—on the morrow of her sacrifice—was her husband leaving her and blaming her.

She would not even try to profit by what time she

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had, but sat in the house, and now had the bottle out and viewed it with unutterable fear, and now, with loathing, hid it out of sight.

By and by, Keawe came back, and would have her take a drive.

"My husband, I am ill," she said. "I am out of heart. Excuse me, I can take no pleasure."

Then was Keawe more wroth than ever. With her, because he thought she was brooding over the case of the old man; and with himself, because he thought she was right, and was ashamed to be so happy.

"This is your truth," cried he, "and this your affection! Your husband is just saved from eternal ruin, which he encountered for the love of you—and you can take no pleasure! Kokua, you have a disloyal heart."

He went forth again furious, and wandered in the town all day. He met friends, and drank with them; they hired a carriage and drove into the country, and there drank again. All the time Keawe was ill at ease, because he was taking this pastime while his wife was sad, and because he knew in his heart that she was more right than he; and the knowledge made him drink the deeper.

Now, there was an old brutal Haole drinking with him, one that had been a boatswain of a whaler—a runaway, a digger in gold mines, a convict in prison. He had a low mind and a foul mouth; he loved to drink and to see others drunken; and he pressed the glass upon Keawe. Soon there was no more money in the company.

"Here, you!" says the boatswain, "you are rich, you have been always saying. You have a bottle or some foolishness."

"Yes," says Keawe, "I am rich; I will go back and get some money from my wife, who keeps it."

"That's a bad idea, mate," said the boatswain. "Never

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you trust a petticoat with dollars. They're all as false as water; you keep an eye on her."

Now, this word struck in Keawe's mind; for he was muddled with what he had been drinking.

"I should not wonder but she was false, indeed," thought he. "Why else should she be so cast down at my release? But I will show her I am not the man to be fooled. I will catch her in the act."

Accordingly, when they were back in town, Keawe bade the boatswain await for him at the corner, by the old calaboose, and went forward up the avenue alone to the door of his house. The night had come again; there was a light within, but never a sound; and Keawe crept about the corner, opened the back door softly, and looked in.

There was Kokua on the floor, the lamp at her side; before her was a milk-white bottle, with a round belly and a long neck; and as she viewed it, Kokua wrung her hands.

A long time Keawe stood and looked in the doorway. At first he was struck stupid; and then fear fell upon him that the bargain had been made amiss, and the bottle had come back to him as it came at San Francisco; and at that his knees were loosened, and the fumes of the wine departed from his head like mists off a river in the morning. And then he had another thought; and it was a strange one, that made his cheeks to burn.

"I must make sure of this," thought he.

So he closed the door, and went softly round the corner again, and then came noisily in, as though he were but now returned. And, lo! by the time he opened the front door no bottle was to be seen; and Kokua sat in a chair and started up like one awakened out of sleep.

"I have been drinking all day and making merry,"

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said Keawe. "I have been with good companions, and now I only come back for money, and return to drink and carouse with them again."

Both his face and voice were as stern as judgment, but Kokua was too troubled to observe.

"You do well to use your own, my husband," said she, and her words trembled.

"Oh, I do well in all things," said Keawe, and he went straight to the chest and took out money. But he looked besides in the corner where they kept the bottle, and there was no bottle there.

At that the chest heaved upon the floor like a sea-billow, and the house span about him like a wreath of smoke, for he saw she was lost now, and there was no escape. "It is what I feared," he thought. "It is she who has bought it."

And then he came to himself a little and rose up; but the sweat streamed on his face as thick as the rain and as cold as the well-water.

"Kokua," said he, "I said to you to-day what ill became me. Now I return to carouse with my jolly companions," and at that he laughed a little quietly. "I will take more pleasure in the cup if you forgive me."

She clasped his knees in a moment; she kissed his knees with flowing tears.

"Oh," she cried, "I asked but a kind word!"

"Let us never one think hardly of the other," said Keawe, and was gone out of the house.

Now, the money that Keawe had taken was only some of that store of centime pieces they had laid in at their arrival. It was very sure he had no mind to be drinking. His wife had given her soul for him, now he must give his for hers; no other thought was in the world with him.

At the corner, by the old calaboose, there was the boatswain waiting.

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"My wife has the bottle," said Keawe, "and, unless you help me to recover it, there can be no more money and no more liquor to-night."

"You do not mean to say you are serious about that bottle?" cried the boatswain.

"There is the lamp," said Keawe. "Do I look as if I was jesting?"

"That is so," said the boatswain. "You look as serious as a ghost."

"Well, then," said Keawe, "here are two centimes; you must go to my wife in the house, and offer her these for the bottle, which (if I am not much mistaken) she will give you instantly. Bring it to me here, and I will buy it back from you for one; for that is the law with this bottle, that it still must be sold for a less sum. But whatever you do, never breathe a word to her that you have come from me."

"Mate, I wonder are you making a fool of me?" asked the boatswain.

"It will do you no harm if I am," returned Keawe.

"That is so, mate," said the boatswain.

"And if you doubt me," added Keawe, "you can try. As soon as you are clear of the house, wish to have your pocket full of money, or a bottle of the best rum, or what you please, and you will see the virtue of the thing."

"Very well, Kanaka," says the boatswain. "I will try; but if you are having your fun out of me, I will take my fun out of you with a belaying-pin."

So the whaler-man went off up the avenue; and Keawe stood and waited. It was near the same spot where Kokua had waited the night before; but Keawe was more resolved, and never faltered in his purpose; only his soul was bitter with despair.

It seemed a long time he had to wait before he heard a voice singing in the darkness of the avenue. He